LETTERS TO SALESMEN

by Stuart Thomson

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Stuart Thomson

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To
Colette

I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation to W. Leonard Hill for his guidance during the formative years of my business life

There are 14 cartoons in *Letters to Salesmen.*

With four exceptions, all these cartoons originally appeared in *The Insurance Salesman* of Indianapolis, Ind., U.S.A., and I am grateful to the Editor of that journal for permission to reproduce the cartoons in this book.

I also have to thank the proprietors of *Punch* for their co-operation in allowing me to reprint the two cartoons which will be found on page 64 and on the wrapper.

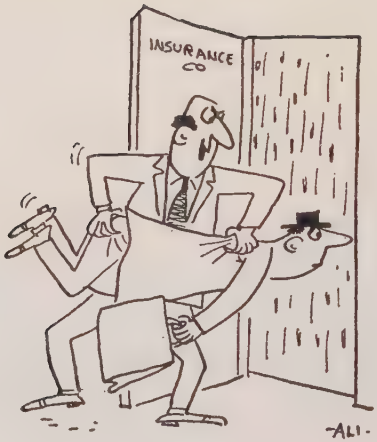
The two cartoons which appear on pages 119 and 142 were drawn by my wife, Colette.

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	11
Sell for selling's sake	14
The other man's office	16
No banners, no bunting, no bugles	18
It's in the bag	19
About men who get "subbed"	21
It depends what you mean by "investing"	24
There's a limit to temperament	26
Desk-bound and foot-loose	28
It's the sense of adventure	31
It pays to be partial	33
Sales conferences increase turnover	35
So you've got the territory	36
An order is an order—when it's an order	38
What about a postcard?	40
It's evening in the provinces	41
"I have a wife and children to feed"	44
A visiting card is not a passport	46
So you didn't agree!	49
On comparing earnings	51
Recording is essential	54
The salesman is an advocate	56
It's a telephone—not a paperweight	58
So you don't own a car	60
On gazing at green fields	62
The importance of incentive	65

Secure orders! 67
It's coffee time 68
Elation and depression 70
Keeping on the move 72
So you want your own company 74
Too much of a good thing 77
On enthusing yourself 79
A stranger in paradise 81
"Let's go on and make it better" 83
Buying a lunch won't buy an order 86
His own managerial responsibilities 88
Like what you sell 90
"On the road" to money 92
Know your form 95
First-class firms or fatuous fools? 97
No suit, no sale 99
The product needs romance 101
That's how the cookie crumbles 103
The prospect—a remarkable man 105
Dangerous friends 108
The man who lost his territory 111
Make the buyer's job easier 113
So you think the going's tough! 115
Plan and prepare 117
A climate of opinion 120
Liking the job 121
A reasonable man 123
Guessing's no good 124
Doing business with friends 127
A man of confidence 129
Action brings results 131
"Sitting it out" 133
On influencing a sale 136
The other man's ego 138

Personal presentation 140
Do you ask yourself why? 143
Are you "Offering for sale" or selling? 146
Making people want to buy 148
A peg for the hat 150
They call you the public analyst 152
Inconspicuously well-dressed 154
Gaining experience 156
The first man you see 157
View selling in perspective 158
On not being funny 160
Don't get upset 161
Tension and worry don't help selling 164
An action book 167
Anything but magic 168
He failed as a salesman 170
On not being a postman 172
A man of repute 175
Appendix—The Market Is What You Make It—
By Salesmanship 178



"Here we go—off to a flying start!"

INTRODUCTION

by

TOM HULL

Sales Director, the Dictaphone Company Ltd.

It was in February 1955 that the first issue of Stuart Thomson's monthly Newsletter *Selling* crossed my desk and I recall saying to myself, "Here's a publication written expressly for those engaged in speciality sales activity, by a man who knows what he is talking about." I've been a regular subscriber ever since.

Selling is concerned with the interests of men who, by the exercise of ability and energy, locate their own prospects and create within those prospects an intense desire to purchase. These are the salesmen who build turnover and who obtain orders by skill, enthusiasm and experience.

Stuart Thomson went on the road at the early age of eighteen. By the time war was declared in 1939 he had already been called up as he was in the Territorial Army. He was then twenty-two. For four years, therefore, he had been gaining selling experience at a time when many of his contemporaries were at university.

On demobilisation in 1946 he rejoined his old Company. Subsequently he formed his own Sales Agency. This was merged with another Company of which he became Managing Director. He was then thirty-five. Stuart Thomson has gained, during the post-war years, much experience of successful selling in most of the principal cities of the United Kingdom and in a number of countries overseas. He has, for instance, "cold turkey"

called in towns as far apart as Johannesburg, Cairo and Amsterdam.

From his intense interest in all aspects of sales development and, in particular, those pertaining to speciality selling, he developed the idea of his monthly Newsletter. So rapid has been the growth of its circulation that he now has to devote all his time to its development and to sales consulting and lecturing work which has arisen from the publication of *Selling*.

One of the principal features of each issue of *Selling* is a personal letter written to a salesman on the road. A collection of these letters has been made and forms the basis of this book, published by The World's Work (1913) Limited, who are also responsible for publishing in Great Britain the works of Dale Carnegie, Fulton Oursler, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and Frank Bettger.

In his letters to salesmen on the road, Stuart Thomson has placed himself in the position of being an adviser, writing to different salesmen about their varied problems. He has obviously taken advantage of the fact that under these circumstances he is free to say what he likes, how he likes, constructively. How well he does it is revealed in these letters. Their primary purpose is, of course, to help salesmen—but what a mass of information they contain for the Sales Director, Sales Manager and, for that matter, all who have anything to do with salesmen and who wish to understand them better!

Salesmen will often feel that some of the letters could have been written directly to them, about a particular problem that has been bothering them—or about that little thing they do, or fail to do, which constantly annoys their Sales Managers, but which they have not yet

managed to get in proper perspective. I commend these letters to you, knowing full well that you will find in them a wealth of understanding of the everyday problems of salesmen and an abundance of sheer good common-sense advice.

SELL FOR SELLING'S SAKE

Dear Tim,

Writing and publishing a Newsletter called *Selling* seems to involve me, somewhat inevitably, in a considerable amount of correspondence. I refer to personal correspondence and not to the letters which result from administrative matters.

The other day I was looking through old records and came across a letter I received about the time of the second issue of *Selling*, which was March 1955. A young man had written to me and said, "I am an outside representative, and shall be glad of all the help available where selling is concerned."

Now you, too, have just begun life on the road and your mind is questioning what the future holds for you as a salesman.

When a man begins to think seriously about sales problems, when his mind begins to explore the thousand facets of selling, when he asks questions—why then he is already on the way to becoming a better salesman. So much is important—voice, clothes, timing and enthusiasm. Paramount is the fixity of purpose to obtain the order, enthusiasm, common-sense planning and the packing in of a sufficiency of calls.

Encouragement is essential and the younger men, particularly, become easily discouraged. Young men hunger for encouragement, they eat it up in order to give themselves strength for a calling needing patience and determination.

So I ask, "Does the possibility of earning a large sum of money interest you?" Well, be encouraged. Because with the exception of the entertainment industry, and

certain professional sports, selling is about the only career where really young men can and do, some of them, earn extremely high incomes for their age.

"Does comparative freedom attract you?" Well, be encouraged. To a large extent a salesman is master of his own time. If you are piling up the orders you can take a day off for a Test Match and your Sales Director will probably lend you his field-glasses.

"You don't like being 'Bossed'." Well, be encouraged. If you are even moderately successful as a salesman it will be a unique Sales Manager who will start ordering you around. You will be far too valuable to risk upsetting, unfairly.

"You want travel, change, glamour and possibly a Company-supplied car?" Well, be encouraged. If you become a good salesman some or all of these things will come to you unless you are very, very unfortunate. Selling can provide a wonderful life. It is good work you do as a salesman, for every sale transacted raises the standard of living, however minutely, of mankind.

These pen pictures are not mirages or dreams but tangible realities.

I have referred to the prizes and the privileges that come from successful selling and yet there is another and greater truth. In my early twenties I had not the experience to appreciate or understand this truth but, nowadays, I am constantly being brought to appreciate its value. Men have been made rich and powerful from selling but few of them planned it that way. They walked, by their own efforts, from bleak economic deserts to rich material pastures, because they could not do otherwise. Being in love with their work they worked for love of it. Riches followed the love of work, work did not follow the love of riches.

Time and time again I am impressed with this fact. Great commercial magnates do not work for money—they work to create with the same love of creation that possesses an artist or a poet. The best advice I can give you is the same advice that I wrote to the young man in March 1955. Sell for selling's sake and everything else will fall into its natural place.

Sincerely,

STUART

THE OTHER MAN'S OFFICE

Dear Stanley,

If you trace back on your orders for the last six months you'll see that the bulk of your turnover came from clients you had actually visited on one or more occasions. Your original negotiations had taken place in other people's offices.

You sat talking to those business contacts across their desks. You conducted your selling on their premises. You went to see them, they did not come to see you. The orders you obtained, therefore, resulted from work successfully undertaken in an office—but it was not your office.

Your place of business, the location where you made the money, was in the prospect's office.

The more time you spend in clients' and prospects' offices, and the less time you spend behind your own desk, the more money will you make.

There is, of course, a qualification. The qualification

is that there is some essential personal office work which you may have to do. Letters have to be dictated and they have to be signed. Sales and prospect record cards must be kept in order for you to plan efficiently. Sometimes it will be necessary to do special research and fact-finding before calling upon a particular client. This type of work, intelligently undertaken, helps to build sales. But your office and the facilities it supplies are only intended to have one function as far as you are concerned. That is to supply you with an operating base and sales aids which *help you to sell in the offices of other people.*

I mention this because you said to me, the other day, that you thought your Company did not supply its salesmen with very comfortable office accommodation. As a matter of fact, I don't think they intended to supply "very comfortable" accommodation. There is something magnetic about a comfortable office. It attracts people inside it, and the more comfortable it is the more it tends to keep its occupants inside it. This is all very well for an office executive, but it should not apply to a man whose duties to his Company are concerned with conducting its affairs as a trade ambassador in other people's territories.

Bluntly speaking, *your Company do not want you to be in your office unless it is absolutely vital that you should be there for the purpose of increasing sales turnover.*

I shouldn't worry overmuch about office comforts. When you next pass the open door of some staff wallah and you see him sitting in his swivel chair, behind a fattish desk and his feet resting on a carpet, console yourself with this thought. He probably envies the freedom you enjoy, the life you lead and, quite possibly, your income compared with his. "Lucky fellow, old Stanley,"

he may say to himself. "He leads such an interesting life. I wish I wasn't tied to all this office work."

Sincerely,

STUART

NO BANNERS, NO BUNTING, NO BUGLES

Dear Jim,

Now that your selling apprenticeship is over you are a recognised, accepted member of the sales team of your Company. If you want it that way you have a job for life. You can make a career where you are.

As you become increasingly established you may find that your Company tends to make less obvious fuss of you than during your first few months with them.

In your early days much was made of you when you brought in orders. Quite often you received congratulations, both written and verbal. The reason for this was to emphasise the importance of your having faith in yourself as a salesman.

The fact that management may now *appear* to take less notice of you is a compliment to you. It means an open recognition of your ability and integrity. It is no longer considered necessary to supervise or cosset you with such detailed care.

Of course this does not mean that people are really taking less interest in you or that your performance figures are not carefully noted. It just indicates you are considered to be sufficiently mature to carry out your selling responsibilities without consistent back-slapping. Other men are in more urgent need of morale-boosting.

Your task is to bring in the orders and it is expected that you will do so. The fact that you are building up turnover will not be considered as a unique performance. On the contrary, it will be failure on your part which will be looked upon as surprising.

So now, when you chalk up a routine order, there will be an absence of Banners, Bunting and Bugles to celebrate the fact, and your colleagues will no longer appear to be dazzled by your success. When you obtain an order you will just be doing what you are paid to do—sell.

As you progress you will find that, automatically, you raise your sights. What seemed unobtainable some while back has now been achieved. What now appears difficult will, in all probability, be achieved in the future.

If, however, you are outstanding, break all records and top your quota month after month, you will hear about it though you will not need to be told.

When you become that good the congratulations of others will be far less important to you than the feeling of creative satisfaction within you.

Sincerely,

STUART

IT'S IN THE BAG

Dear Ted,

It's in the bag but it shouldn't be. Or, if it has to be, it really ought not to be dangled in front of the client. It will only bamboozle him.

A dispatch case or sample bag has as its main purpose in life the task of containing the equipment necessary for the conduct of your business.

Any other usages are secondary and should be a carefully kept secret between you and your bag.

A very surprising and by no means favourable impression is created if you put your hand in the bag for a business paper and produce, instead, a hazardously filled in football coupon. And if you, by some error of handling, drop a packet of sandwiches on the prospect's desk, you may set up a violent attack of imaginative indigestion.

Talk about women and the amount of fantastic trivia they carry around in their handbags! Believe me when I say that some salesmen are in fanatical competition with their girl friends when it comes to carrying around a load of junk.

Have you ever had the doubtful privilege of seeing old Jim delving about in his dispatch case? There's usually a packet of bird seed for that psychopathic parrot of his. Some hotel-room key that he has forgotten to post back after a provincial trip, a golf ball, half a pair of old gloves, some shoe-laces (rather sensible when you come to think about it), a few dilapidated tablets of chewing-gum and, for some extraordinary reason, a wall-paper scraper.

Of course, it's too much to hope, and certainly too much to expect, that salesmen will ever cease carrying round a small museum of personal possessions in their bags. But it might be an idea if you, for one, made sure that all the personal things which have not the remotest connection with your day's work were kept in a separate compartment of your bag and that you knew precisely where they were. Anyway, when, in front of the prospect, you reach for an order form, make very very sure that it is not a reminder from the Post Office that your television licence needs renewing.

The prospect expects you to perform as a salesman—not as a conjuror.

Sincerely,
STUART

ABOUT MEN WHO GET "SUBBED"

Dear Basil,

Every profession and industry has, I suppose, its percentage of spendthrifts and profligates. Certainly there are quite a number of speciality salesmen who part with their own money in a frenzy of haste and then find themselves dependent instead of independent.

Most salesmen practise the same domestic economy as other men, but as you gain more experience in selling you will be surprised at the number of speciality salesmen in their forties and fifties who seem to be short of ready cash and whose assets are nil—their debts outweighing the value of such property as they possess.

By nature, most salesmen are optimists and extroverts. A minority, poor savers by inclination anyway, always live and spend on the crest of the wave. If orders are plentiful and earnings are high, then these men spend money up to the hilt as they are firmly convinced that next month's earnings will be higher still. If business is bad, then they believe that conditions must improve, so they spend away in anticipation.

This is an attitude of mind which is good for selling but poor for the personal exchequer. These men always feel they have to "put up a show" and as they grow older, some of them tend to over-drink.

Every Sales Manager has experience of these people.

They often need to be "subbed", they want to borrow from the Petty Cash, and in time it is someone's unpleasant duty to keep an eagle eye on their expense accounts. Sooner or later the Company finds that the man concerned is in debt to tradespeople and the situation becomes increasingly difficult and embarrassing.

So long as they retain their health, many of these men remain very good salesmen. They *have* to sell in order to attempt to cope with their obligations. As they grow older their resilience weakens and they become prematurely tired because of the nervous energy they have expended in coping with their personal problems. They lose their grip and their selling prowess rapidly deteriorates.

This type of man will always be with us and no Welfare State will ever eradicate such human weaknesses.

When salesmen live high and consistently over-spend, there is something infinitely pathetic in the situation. Here you have men whose turnover, through many years, runs into hundreds of thousands of pounds. They have enthusiastically helped to enrich the lives of their employers and their clients. They, themselves, have earned a great deal of money. Yet they have nothing to show for their efforts. They have frittered away their substance and although helping to create wealth for others they have wilfully inflicted poverty upon themselves. They reach their later years to find themselves completely at the mercy of every wind of economic circumstance.

These men are the tragedies of selling. Colleagues, who are only half as effective as salesmen, can retire comparatively comfortably because they have husbanded their quite adequate resources. Colleagues who are less brilliant but much more stable, always rise above the cheerful spendthrifts.

As you grow older you will, inevitably, meet these men and some of them are absolute charmers. Don't let yourself follow their example or you will be lost. You will become a man on a treadmill.

Save you must, to succeed. The savings need not stay necessarily locked up in the bank. You can use them to take an interest in a business or you can buy property.

At the head of many great companies you will find a man who has been a salesman and who has spent years on the road. A rich man, a powerful man. These leaders of industry are the star salesmen who were not only first class on the road, but who also possessed the common sense to manage their personal affairs with acumen and shrewdness.

There are salesmen who have helped numerous clients to success and yet who have consistently hindered themselves by wilful self-indulgence and feckless and unnecessary personal extravagance. These are not the most attractive of selling's personnel.

Sincerely,

STUART

IT DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN BY "INVESTING"

Dear Ray,

A couple of insignificant wins on the football pools about seven years ago and you have been plunging ever since. Investing, you call your permutative activities.

Very few people would really object to this pastime of yours, and only the most calvinistic would say that the 8s. a week you spend in this fashion is a major luxury, considering the income you earn.

But, of course, I'm a little sore with you. I give what I hope is some friendly advice about an investment and I'm told two things, and a third is indicated. You said (*a*) the firm should do it for you, and (*b*) you can't afford it. You then vaguely indicated that the matter under discussion was not really my business anyway.

All I said was that it would be an investment for you to purchase, and keep at home, the four Directories and Year Books which completely cover the industry to which you sell. The total annual cost of all four volumes, inclusive, comes to £10 18s. 6d. When you said you couldn't afford it, I certainly replied that if you could risk 8s. a week on the hazards of professional ball-kickers your could surely invest a smaller sum in yourself when the return was absolutely guaranteed.

The four books in question are in your Company offices, I know. But when you are actually in those offices you say, quite rightly, that you are too preoccupied to have time to study them carefully. They are also in the City Library and it is agreed that the Library is a long way from your home.

Surely the Company already does enough to help you sell? To say that they should buy a set of directories

for home use (with no guarantee that you would ever look at them) is too much. Carried to its logical extreme it might be suggested that they hire a salesman to do your selling for you.

If you will go out and buy those four books, and study them at home in a relaxed frame of mind for two periods of half an hour a week, I guarantee the following will occur as a result of your spare-time research.

You will discover a whole lot of new prospects. New selling ideas and ways of approach will come to you. You will learn more and more of the industry you serve. You will begin to find those books of cold fact become inspirational.

Your sales will increase, almost automatically, and so will your income. Your *investment* will pay a big dividend. And then, if you really want to do so, you will be able to waste 12s. a week on the pools, instead of 8s.

Sincerely,

STUART

THERE'S A LIMIT TO TEMPERAMENT

Dear Bert,

Most of the time, your Assistant Company Secretary can't find anyone particularly anxious to hear his views on anything and he's taken to talking to his calculating machine. The other day, he was muttering away to it about how very temperamental were some of the people on the sales force.

As a matter of fact, and he loves dealing with the facts, he was right. Nearly all salesmen are temperamental—some apparently much more so than others. *Where you have men of independence, adventure, élan, spirit and imagination you have men of temperament.* However, by no means every salesman is given to open displays of temperament.

There is hardly a salesman in the country who does not try to behave himself correctly when in front of clients and prospects.

If he's developed moodiness he rightly hides it on his business calls. Here and there, though, are men who wrongly inflict their moods and temperaments on their families, friends and business colleagues.

There are prospects who are not well-mannered and quite a few who are of limited intelligence. With all of these a salesman has a bounden duty to be considerate and polite. The reaction comes when he's outside again. The full impact is felt of the expenditure of nervous energy, the realisation that it could have been a troublesome interview if he had let it run that way.

Then, too, are the odd requests for service he has to comply with and a whole set of factors that can interrupt and mar the best of well-planned days.

Very often, because he's so much alone, he has to live with real problems which he cannot unburden on the spot. These problems sometimes tend to grow in his mind until they are exaggerated out of all proportion. The fact that they have become exaggerated in no way helps to solve them.

The salesman, too, is always conscious of his turnover figures and the need for bettering his best. *Good salesmen are creative artists and intent on perfecting their ability.* Like most artists, they can become highly strung at times.

However able the Management, there are occasions when even very balanced salesmen think they are misunderstood by Head Office and if only such-and-such a thing was operated differently the world would be a better place.

Sales Directors and Sales Managers of calibre always realise they are working with a team of individualistic men. They genuinely try to understand and study each man's peculiarities of temperament. The other executives in a business, who have no sales experience, very often fail to appreciate the salesmen's outlook.

A degree of temperament goes with the job in selling. *Salesmen are working with people—not ledgers.* If they lacked sensitivity and flair they would be poor performers on the road. Selling is a personal business involving personalities.

What I would ask you to consider, though, is this. *Don't inflict temperamental outbursts on your business colleagues.* They are so fully concerned with their own problems that they have little time or inclination to cater to your petulances. They will be pleased to help you in any genuine difficulties but what they will not tolerate is the man who bores others, sometimes almost

blackmails, with outbursts of peevishness. They soon dislike working with a man who, every time he fails to get his own way, stages a fearful scene and afterwards puts it down to, "Well, we salesmen are awfully temperamental, old boy." This type of fellow is the supreme egoist. Other people's temperaments don't count. Only his own matters.

The salesman who makes a big display of his "temperament"—and doesn't hesitate to show it—soon finds himself cold-shouldered by people in general and his own sales colleagues in particular. *A man's sensitivity will be respected, his selfishness abhorred.*

Sincerely,

STUART

DESK-BOUND AND FOOT-LOOSE

Dear Kenneth,

Two of the men in your small sales force are remarkable in so far as they are both hard workers who fall far short of their sales potential. Each of them has, in overabundance, a quality that the other lacks.

There is James, the demon for systems, whom any successful Army commander would have been delighted to have on his staff. Then there is Alan, who uses physical energy so prodigiously that he must be a direct descendant of one of the toilers who laboriously helped build the Pyramids.

James keeps records. He keeps records of records. As we know, they are largely records of contacts *he intends to make.* He has his territory geographically broken

down, his calls economically timed—*waiting for the day he will make them.*

He has a steadily increasing pile of prospect cards. They are annotated with vital information, for future use, and festooned with different coloured plastic indicators. James has loose-leaf books neatly indexed and wall charts as well. What is more, he is always working on his sales story. He polishes every aspect of it. He has what it takes, but he doesn't take it very far or very often. He suffers from a kind of acute physical inertia. He does not make nearly enough calls. He fails to see enough people. Yet, in his office, he works hard.

With all this elaboration of system behind him, he makes only a third of the number of calls he could and should make. Certainly he obtains enough business to obtain a living and cover his cost to the Company. This is because his calls are of high quality and he is a competent salesman. But how much better off he would be were he to get down to operating his system as well as he devises it. When his conscience pricks him, as it often does, about not making more calls, he draws solace by retiring to his systems and charts and improving them still further.

Now Alan is a bundle of physical energy. He speeds about the place like a Sputnik out of orbit. He toils and he labours. He calls on everybody, everywhere in his territory. If a travelling circus caught his eye he'd be knocking on the tent flap of the lion tamer in the hope of selling him some of your wire.

At the end of each day he's too exhausted to make plans or transcribe notes even if he wanted to, and needless to say, he doesn't want to. Alan is as mentally lazy as James is physically lazy.

Record keeping, intelligent prospecting, note taking,

planning and, most of all, thinking about his work, are utter anathema to him. His reports, if that is the name for them, are untidy, inconsistent and, usually, days late. He knows he should do more paper-work but does not do it, and finds release in making still more haphazard calls.

Yet Alan holds his job down. He makes enough sales to get by. This is the just reward he gets from his energy. He sees so many people that, now and again, he happens to arrive at the right place at the right time. Also he calls back, again and again. His net is cast so far and so wide that he catches something.

What a pity it is these two men cannot transfuse a proportion of their qualities to one another. *If only James would operate his plans and Alan plan his operations. One, the thinker, does not "do" and the other, the doer, does not think.*

Selling requires a combination of mental and physical activity. One, without the other, cannot lead to success.

Sincerely,

STUART

"I think you'd better see him, Mr. Blott."

31

IT'S THE SENSE OF ADVENTURE

Dear Stephen,

Since you ask me what attracts me to selling—as a career—I will try and tell you.

It would be pleasant to say that the major appeal, to me, lies in service to the community, but this would not be entirely frank. To get satisfaction from selling one has to like people and be of service, and one has to believe that when a sale is made one is being of service. Then there is the awareness that selling creates work and wealth for mankind.

Important though it is to appreciate the value of salesmanship and the benefits selling has brought, it is not a sense of serving people which gives to me selling's greatest appeal. If I were as altruistic as this, who is to say that I—or you—would not have felt the call to be a doctor, a teacher, a cleric or a court probationer.

By far the greatest appeal to me that selling makes is the sense of daily adventure that it brings. In this modern age, in which the responsibilities of life do tend to shackle us, few are the people who are in a position to go exploring in Central Africa or who can snowcat across the southern Polar regions.

As I have always had to earn my living, I have found that selling supplies me with sufficient daily variety, unexpectedness and modified excitement to banish boredom. Selling is a challenge and I find it creative.

Selling takes me around, lets me meet people, and confronts me with sets of circumstances which enable me to try and use initiative.

Coupled with the sense of adventure is one of independence. I think the two are closely related. Like thousands

of other salesmen, I know that if I can obtain sufficient orders, and keep within the confines of Company policy, I am as near to being my own boss as is possible. You can climb very high in the ranks of administrative management and still work under far more restriction than even a modestly successful salesman has to contend with.

Adventure, independence, relative freedom, the sense of creative satisfaction when I obtain an order. These are the qualities which make speciality salesmanship outstandingly attractive to me. It's true that there are tensions and worries—this is particularly so when one is having a poor run of business. But you cannot go adventuring and pioneering anywhere without paying the price and, to me, the price has always seemed worth paying.

I think you see life and you live it fully when you are a salesman. Men and women also have to work in offices and factories. They just have to. Unless they did, civilisation as we know it would perish. We owe them a great debt.

But we are the fortunate ones. We have much freedom, we have a large measure of independence and can exercise our enterprise and personalities. The fact that we are also of service and pretty well remunerated makes the salesman's life all the more satisfying.

Sincerely,

STUART

IT PAYS TO BE PARTIAL

Dear Tom,

One of the phrases that has come into fairly common use is "Speaking impartially". It generally has about as much authenticity as another statement people sometimes make—"In my humble opinion". When you hear someone say, "Well, in my humble opinion," then you will need a telescope to seek for the humility. There aren't so many people about with a genuinely humble opinion of themselves.

And not many people exist who are capable of speaking impartially. They may make a real effort to be impartial, to give a completely unbiased survey of the pros and cons of any situation, but they are much handicapped. They are influenced, without always being fully aware of the fact, by past experience, by prejudices of environment, subtle preferences and acquired knowledge. Judges, solicitors, experienced committee chairmen, certain research workers and scientists are the type of people who, through training, are capable of giving impartial summaries. Salesmen are seldom impartial.

Anyway, salesmen are paid to be partial. They are also paid to influence others to partiality.

It is one of the great pleasures of selling—this approved licence for partiality. Providing that a salesman presents no facts which are untrue, assuming that he only attempts to influence those whom he really believes can benefit from such influence and allowing for the fact that he must not denigrate fair competition, then *he can be as partial as he pleases, and the more partial the better.*

The power and ability to transmit this partiality is

what gives to selling its tremendous excitement, its variety and its opportunity.

You sell industrial lighting equipment. It is your job to establish the strongest possible need and desire, within prospects, for improved factory illumination. Having done that you have to do everything you legitimately can to obtain the order for your Company.

You can be poetic, factual, persuasive, emotional, logical, considerate, advisory. You can paint verbal pictures, outline benefits, dramatise, simplify, persist and perform.

You are expected to enthuse and influence.

You are entitled to do everything you possibly and fairly can to obtain clients for your Company. *Your whole task is to encourage people to purchase from you.*

It is a great and thrilling challenge, this projection of partiality. You meet a man whom you have reason to suppose can benefit from following your advice. To obtain results and gain satisfaction from your work you have to be very partial, and the prospect, when he becomes a client, has to be pleased that you were so convincing.

In selling, it does not pay to be impartial and you are not paid to be so.

Sincerely,

STUART

SALES CONFERENCES INCREASE TURNOVER

Dear William,

A well-organised sales meeting can have a stimulating effect on the participants. A poorly run meeting can send salesmen away regretting the time they lost from their normal daily work.

To-day, most company sales meetings are carefully planned and succeed in their threefold intention. This is: (*a*) to inform the sales organisation of facts, developments and plans concerning the Company and its products; (*b*) to cultivate the team spirit; and (*c*) to invigorate the salesmen with a desire to increase turnover.

Quite a number of salesmen, including a few very good ones, still regard sales meetings with a degree of disdain. Generally, though, the men who have such feelings are those who are not dedicated to their work. They are routine men, with routine minds. The type who are in a rut simply because they like being in a rut.

Are sales conferences worth while when judged solely on specific sales results?

Practically every capable Sales Director I have spoken to on this subject expresses the following viewpoint.

The consensus of opinion is: "For about four to six weeks after our sales conference we notice that our men produce noticeably higher turnover figures. There is an upsurge of successful calls. Then the additional impetus seems to fall off and the pattern returns to normal."

The problem which always confronts sales management is how best to maintain the peak of enthusiasm which usually follows a successful sales conference.

Sincerely,

STUART

SO YOU'VE GOT THE TERRITORY

Dear Sam,

So they've moved James Black. They've taken him, very suddenly, right off the territory and put him into Head Office as Assistant Sales Manager. It's obvious they're going to groom him for taking over the Sales Management when Bill Robinson retires in the near future.

Of course, it's not really surprising at all. James has increased the turnover for five years, in a way that seems fantastic even to your Managing Director who has been, and still is, a fine salesman.

It's the way in which James has done it that is nearly as impressive as the actual results. He's done it the orthodox way—by means which all Sales Managers admire. *He made his first call earlier than most men and finished his last call later.*

His reporting and note-taking have been meticulous and up to the minute. He has forwarded good suggestions and refrained from putting forward weird brain children. He has always shown the team spirit. He has made a lot of friends for his Company. *He has kept on selling, selling, selling.*

What has surprised some of your colleagues is that you have been selected to take over James's territory, which has become a very important one. And you say you're a bit worried on two counts: (1) that Head Office will compare your performance with James's and (2) that James was esteemed on such a high personal basis by nearly all his clients. You feel you'll be selling in his shadow.

Actually, you ought to be delighted for you have been

paid a great compliment by your Company considering you've been with them only two years. It looks as though you're on your way up, too.

When you go calling, you're going to hear many people enquiring after James, and you'll have to listen to some nostalgic comments from clients.

Never, never play him down when talking about him. On the other hand, never act as though you're a substitute and know it. You are you, and you've been put where you are because of that fact. There will be an enormous amount of goodwill to be tapped just because James was such a popular man.

If you want to build on that goodwill, you'll find that comments such as, "Mr. Fellows, one of the reasons I'm so glad to meet you is because Mr. Black has told me that you were among the people he most liked doing business with," will be helpful.

As far as Head Office is concerned, they know perfectly well that there's a limit to the rate at which the market can expand. I doubt if they expect that the turnover can continue to rise by the same ratio as it has done the past five years.

But they do expect that it can be still further developed and their judgment is that you are the man who can do it. So you can—and the first person to congratulate you will be James. *His past performance can be your platform to great personal success.*

Sincerely,

STUART

AN ORDER IS AN ORDER—WHEN IT'S AN ORDER

Dear Charlie,

Anything, just about anything, can happen between now and next week when old Binks is going to send you that order. At least, he says he's going to send it then and I've got not the slightest doubt that he intends to do so.

But you know what the traffic is these days. It's not probable, though it is possible, that he may land up in hospital owing to a car smash. And, too, people are funny —even solid types like old Binks. He might decide to fly to the Italian Riviera for a spot of autumn sun. In either case, or if he catches influenza, he won't be there next week to send the order.

So little is certain in life. To-day is to-day, yesterday has gone for ever and to-morrow never comes and there's your sales manager waiting for you to meet your quota. And here's old Binks saying, "Well thank you Mr. Smith. I'll send you an order next week."

Charlie, boy, you want the order to-day and not next week. I know, you know and old Binks knows that he's going to send the order next week but that's a jolly sight more than fate or future history knows. Anything can happen.

Of course if Binks has to get someone else's formal sanction and can't work on his own authority that's another matter. If, however, he's got the authority, and he has, there's quite a lot you can do. With a degree of ingenuity you can obtain the order on the spot.

You can, for instance, say something like this: "Well thank you, sir. I'll notify the office of your requirements. As I understand the situation you definitely want the

goods and I certainly appreciate the fact that you wish the order to pass through your books in due course.

"It does occur to me, however, that busy as you are you might like me to confirm the matter to you. Then if you should be called away on business next week or find yourself very tied up with conferences and visitors the machinery of supply will be going smoothly forward. You won't have to keep on reminding yourself that you are going to send us an order and we won't have to worry you with reminders if you happen to be very busy. So many things can happen between now and next week, Mr. Binks, that I believe you would like to feel the question is finalised as far as you are concerned, and that you don't have to give any further thought to the matter until your goods are delivered."

If your firm will work on verbal orders, as many do, you just drop old Binks a line when you get back to the office, confirming his order. I've only given you the bare bones to work on but, with rare exceptions, if Binks means to give you the order he will be prepared to look upon the matter as finalised on the strength of your confirmatory letter.

Obviously you have to use your discretion in this kind of thing but if you remember there's many a slip between cup and lip you won't go far wrong. An order is an order when it's an order, not when it's an expressed intention to order in the future. You must help the client to act now.

Sincerely,

STUART

WHAT ABOUT A POSTCARD?

Dear Vic,

As you are just about to go on holiday, I must keep this letter reasonably short. Every time I go on holiday myself I have the intention of excluding thoughts of business from my mind and getting as complete a change as circumstances permit. The intention is not always realised.

In spite of this, I'll pass on to you the remarks of a salesman friend of mine who has just returned from a holiday in Italy.

He said: "Each year, my wife and I seem to spend quite some time sending postcards to relatives and close friends. But what always amazes me is that we inevitably dispatch a host of cards to fairly obscure acquaintances whom, during the year, we rarely see.

"Anyway, there we were in Rapallo, sending off all these postcards. Suddenly I had an idea. There are about ten of my clients who are quite big and whom I visit very frequently. I said to myself, '*These people have really helped to pay for this holiday.*' Then I thought, my contacts in these firms might appreciate receiving a card from me. It will show them that I do hold them in some special regard.

"*It seemed to me, if I could find time to drop a brief line to second cousin Susan, I could devote the same thought to a few top priority business friends of mine who have gone out of their way to help me quite a number of times.*

"So I sent postcards to just nine or ten people whose business addresses I clearly remembered. I enjoyed doing

it. What's more, I believe those contacts appreciated receiving a card of a non-business nature."

Now I'm not suggesting, Vic, that you should dash off and get a list of your clients to take with you. I'm not even suggesting that you should, whilst on holiday, send a card to one business man. After all, everybody says we must get a complete change whilst on holiday.

On the other hand, the salesman who told me this story left me thinking. Writing cards to exceptionally good clients didn't seem too much trouble to take. I thought he had quite an idea.

Sincerely,

STUART

IT'S EVENING IN THE PROVINCES

Dear James,

There's much more to selling than the process of sale in front of the prospect. There are many circumstances and events which range beyond the mechanical processes of sales promotion.

Selling is a way of life, it produces an attitude of mind on those who practise it. Inevitably, the conditions of a man's work affect his personality and make an impact on his character.

I write this because, to a degree, the pattern of your own life is going to change and this, in its turn, could bring alterations in your personal outlook which might affect you greatly.

Your Company now thinks highly enough of you to send you on a week's provincial trip once a month. You have been on the road for three years in London, and

during that period you have lived comfortably at home. You are twenty-four and unmarried.

Very soon you are going to find yourself in an hotel, away from your parents and friends, and you are going to discover, quite possibly, that you are bored and lonely once the day's calls have been made, your reports completed and the next day's schedule checked.

To my mind this can be one of the most difficult and testing events that can happen to a young salesman. So often youth is restless, easily diverted, readily attracted to the unknown and anxious for enjoyment. There is nothing unnatural about this at all.

You are going to find yourself very much on your own in hotels situated in, to you, strange towns. Your usual spare-time routine will be totally disturbed.

Somehow or other you've got to fill your evenings and it is quite unreasonable to suppose that you will play noughts and crosses with yourself, night after night, in some sombre hotel lounge.

Apart from going to the theatre or the cinema there are other diversions. It's quite easy, sometimes, to have a drink with "the boys". It doesn't take much initiative to look for, and find, some local girl. There's also the billiards saloon, the local dog track or the Palais.

I would not suggest that there is necessarily anything wrong in any of these things. There are, of course, more edifying ways of spending an evening. And dog tracks, in particular, are best left very much alone. You, however, are entitled to enjoy yourself.

I first went to the provinces when I was twenty-one, and found myself selling in places such as Blackburn, Halifax, Northampton and Chesterfield. I used to find the evenings could be dolorous affairs.

All I would say is to try to take a great deal of care

with whom you mix. Just bear in mind that you may never see that set of "boys" again. That the girl may be a "casual". That the dear dogs, our four-footed friends, don't care the smallest bone for you and that the glamour you buy with a ticket to the Palais is very ersatz.

These trips to the provinces can be rewarding, but temptation really is forced upon you by the desire to escape boredom in the evening.

It certainly is not easy to prevent circumstances leading you to places and people whom you might never meet in your own home environment.

Try to play it safe. Act with discretion. You are being relied upon to be adult and mature.

Enjoy your evenings but take care, take very great care. It's in your long-term interest to do so.

Sincerely,

STUART

"I gave up trying to stuff it all in my briefcase."

"I HAVE A WIFE AND CHILDREN TO FEED"

Dear Patrick,

They tell me you had a pretty bleak spell recently and went for quite a time without an order. Well, these poor runs occur to most of us, though in your case they don't happen very often. Knowing you, I bet *none of your prospects was made aware of your bad spell. You didn't inform them that you were undergoing an orderless period.*

I'll tell you why I mention this. As you might expect, I read quite a number of books on salesmanship, and very often mention them in *Selling.*

Recently I bought a book called *The Technique of (British) Salesmanship,* by Andrew George Elliot. It was first published some years ago by Right Way Books—the second edition (1959) costs 7s. 6d.

I was reading it and absorbing much that was instructive when I came across a passage which caused me particular thought. The chapter I was reading was called "Developing Sales Technique". In this Mr. Elliot correctly stresses that too many salesmen become engaged in long social conversations with prospects and tend to ignore the main purpose which is to concentrate on solid selling.

He says: "The experienced salesman may talk for five minutes or for two hours and five minutes of private interests; but the one thing he will never forget—unless his buyer has already placed his order—is to lead him back to the subject of business. In other words, before you leave, make sure that the purpose of your visit has been achieved, or at any rate that the position is not left 'in the air'."

Sound advice which is hardly open to any query.

Then follow these words which surprised me: "Various excuses can be found to this end: for example, 'Before I go, I had better fix up your order; I have a wife and children to feed,' may do the trick. Alternatively, you may explain that you haven't been able to book an order that day so far; perhaps your customer will break your chain of bad luck. But never use the argument that you have not had any business that day unless the statement is true, because buyers often meet together and it is almost certain that you will be found out sooner or later if you have lied about your selling activities."

Well, everyone is entitled to his opinion. Maybe it's me that's wrong, but *I would not have thought that references, however jocular, to the gaping mouths at home were frightfully acceptable to a prospect. Nor do I think that mentioning one's failure to book an order would assist a sale.* An element of personal pleading, an appeal to human kindness seems to be entering the proceedings. My own view is that this type of approach is not everyone's idea of modern salesmanship. Somehow or other I have the feeling that you didn't use this line when you were going through that recent bad run.

The object of salesmanship is presumably to obtain orders by selling. When we fail to get an order, then it may be disappointing and it can be depressing. But it's part of the pattern of our lives. Surely we exceed our sales responsibilities if we try and bring what some people might consider personal matters to bear upon the prospect. If we are without an order, then surely we keep that fact from the prospect and make no mention of being "unable to book any business that day".

What a shock we would get if prospects suddenly told us: "I've got to keep my wife and three children. Then

there's my old Auntie I support. It's difficult to meet the mortgage and my suppliers are chasing me for cash. What can your Company do for me?"

Maybe I've misjudged the meaning of Mr. Elliot's words. Certainly one can say things to a man one knows very well which one would not use to a stranger. Somehow, though, I think you prefer to hide your temporary misfortunes when you sell.

Sincerely,

STUART

A VISITING CARD IS NOT A PASSPORT

Dear Graham,

You scatter visiting cards about like confetti. In the way you use them, your cards become so much waste paper.

They can't talk for you, they can't sell for you. They are wasted on most of the people to whom you scatter them with such carefree abandon.

Visiting cards do serve a useful purpose on certain occasions. But they don't work for you in the way you seem to think.

When you call by appointment the receptionist may take your card in to the prospect. On the other hand she may just telephone through, in which case all that she needs to know is your name and the name of your Company.

When you leave the prospect you can give him your

card, but even this is not really necessary. Anyway, you should write to him, following the interview, on your Company headed paper, confirming the details of your discussion.

Cards are useful when you meet someone at a conference, a club or on a train. Sometimes, of course, you will be asked for a card by a business contact and it will be just as well to have one. Occasionally, a secretary or receptionist will come back from a prospect's office and specifically request a card. In these cases you can hardly refuse to hand one over.

The way you use cards, however, is the wrong way in the opinion of many people who make cold turkey calls. You go up to the commissionaire, or receptionist, and thrust a card at him or her. You then ask if you can see Mr. Brown or whomever else you hope to meet.

Some receptionists act in a most extraordinary way when confronted with a card. They mis-read it, peer at it and then decide, themselves, that "we're not interested" or "Mr. Brown's not seeing anyone to-day". If Brown really is out or engaged, they say they will see he gets your card. All too often it never reaches him.

Somehow or other, using visiting cards as you do, you create in the mind of receptionists that you do not really expect to see Brown or Blenkinsop or anyone at all—you only *hope* to see the man. Sensing this, some of these girls just don't bother to put themselves about. Or they read out your name and Company over the inter-com. in a negative and bleating way, inviting a "No" from the prospect.

You will get more attention if you walk up to the receptionist and say, "I would like to see Mr. Brown, please. My name is Rutherly of the W.Z. Company."

The girl immediately assumes that you already know

Mr. Brown, and she sets about seeing whether he is available. Your approach has been positive.

Should he be out, or unprepared to see you, then you can leave a card, although many people think this is unessential, because you will have to write, or telephone or call again. You must make contact. Even if your card reaches Brown it will probably have little effect unless you approach him again quickly.

I mention this because, at the back of this massive distribution of visiting cards, I believe you consider they are achieving some vital selling purpose. *You get solace when you haven't seen people, by leaving a card.* Few calls are wasted even when you do not see the prospect. You should have learned something from your call. Something about the business, its atmosphere and its products.

A visiting card is not a passport, or a letter of introduction. It is not an entry visa or an admittance ticket. If you rely upon it to open doors for you, you will be disappointed.

Sincerely,

STUART

SO YOU DIDN'T AGREE!

Dear Matthew,

You know what they say in all those books about selling. How a salesman should be a man of personality, drive, courage, endurance, tact, sagacity, integrity and a whole lot of other estimable virtues. Well, the need for these qualities is very real but the acquisition and practice of them is, I feel sure, much more difficult than writing about them.

However, we have to accept the fact that certain qualifications of temperament, personality and balance are essential for a successful career in selling.

If you're a salesman you can't afford to take "No" for an answer. You've got to have determination to get the order. You have to bring the power of your personality and your strength of character into play.

I mention this, as you told me you were very worried because you had informed your Sales Manager that you agreed to a decision of his affecting your work when, deep within yourself, you didn't agree at all. You thought at the time, and still believe now, that he was wrong. You now regret having said "Yes". Quite naturally, you wanted to keep on "good terms", but whether your method was right, in the long run, may be another matter.

Well, you're a salesman. You're supposed to have drive and determination and yet you're also expected to possess tact and discretion. One thing a salesman is not expected to be is a *"Yes man". A "Yes-man" type will never make a good salesman because his life on the road will consist of saying "Yes, sir" to every prospect's "No".*

On the other hand, *conditions would be intolerable*

for you and your Sales Manager if you made a point of issue every time you didn't agree with some small detail of policy. You aren't hired to argue the toss but to be out there getting orders and following Company policy.

Salesmen, however, are understandably independent by nature and appreciate their views being heard.

In the case you told me about, I think you were wrong not to present to your Sales Manager your ideas. You weren't being fair to him and you weren't being fair to yourself because you happen to consider this matter very important. If you don't discuss it with him you'll carry the problem about and cause yourself a lot of disquiet in the process. As you are bound to unleash your feelings to someone (as you did to me) it is much better that you should voice them to the person most concerned. In the end your Sales Manager will hear of your views, maybe from you, maybe from someone else, but not at the right time or in the right atmosphere.

If you put your point of view fairly, sensibly and with good reason to your Sales Manager (at the appropriate time), surely he will not fail to respect you? You must discuss the matter with him. Explain your position. You may still have to do the job his way, but at least you'll have the satisfaction that you've been a man—not a mouse.

The all-important thing is your approach. Tell Jack you want to consult him, you want to put a point of view to him, you need his advice. Supply him with reasons for your difference of opinion. He's reasonable, he'll listen. Even though he may not agree with you he'll realise you've got brains and intelligence. Having done this, you must then accept his decision if it is not in your favour.

If the matter is as vital as you say, and you still think

you're right, then you may have to consider your future employment.

The one thing that seems intolerable, unreasonable and unfair is to say "Yes" to the Sales Manager's face and then regale everyone else, at length and with complete abandon of discretion, as to why you should have said "No". There are some people, not you, who become seditious in circulating complaints and stirring up discontent amongst their colleagues because they were too weak to mention their concern, in the first place, to the man most concerned.

Sincerely,
STUART

ON COMPARING EARNINGS

Dear John,

You are quite right to be so interested in the economics of your employment as a salesman, but don't let yourself be too concerned by the fact that your old school friend, Cyril, *seems* to be earning considerably more than you from his work on the road. Different circumstances, different conditions.

The subject of the remuneration of salesmen is both complex and simple. Complex only because there are, of necessity, scores of methods and systems in operation; each one dove-tailed to the particular needs and experiences of the company operating it. Simple because their intention is the common aim of rewarding a man for work done and supplying incentive to attain better future results.

Whilst both you and Cyril are salesmen, you are with different types of companies selling entirely different products on a different basis. It is, however, very true that Cyril's monthly cheque is considerably larger than yours. It needs to be.

You are a not very senior member of an extremely famous Company. You sell a staple line to retailers and that product is backed by powerful national advertising. You are fed by your management with a constant supply of sales promotional aids. You are paid a good salary and you receive a commission which although not high does enable you to raise your income by successful selling. Those are the obvious emoluments. But there are other important ones which have to be taken into consideration. You are on a generous pension scheme and that is worth money to you—a lot of money. You can gain a bonus and win an incentive prize. You have the use of a Company car and your firm allows you to use it at week-ends and in your spare time.

Your Company, being solidly entrenched, can protect itself and you in years of depression. Your greatest incentive is that there is a big ladder of advancement you can climb within your own organisation. To Branch Managership and from there to Area Managership. Then to Sales Manager of a Division and then to General Sales Manager and still upwards. *You've got a future offering both security and great incentive.*

Your friend Cyril is a speciality salesman, and a good one at that, in a fairly small concern. His basic salary is very meagre but his commission is extremely high. Most of his expense account he has to meet himself.

Each day he has to seek out fresh prospects. He has to find them himself and instil in them a desire to buy a product hardly advertised at all. His job is all creation.

Discovering a prospect, creating a need, securing an order. He has no pension scheme and he has to supply his own car or use public transport. If he is ill for a day his income suffers—if he is off the road for a fortnight his income is cut drastically. He carries a considerable risk element and he has not the powerful sales promotional machinery backing him that supplies you with so much assistance.

Certainly he earns more than you in "take-home" money but he has, after taxation, to lay aside far more than you to safeguard his future for he has no Company pension scheme. His life is altogether tougher than yours and he works longer hours.

If, in these circumstances, you still envy his income (remembering he has none of the Company-supplied benefits you receive) then you had better go and try his job. Maybe you'll make a fortune fast. Some speciality salesmen do and that is one of their justifiable incentives. Maybe, through no fault of your own, you'll find your work has brought you little because some small companies get tossed around in the commercial seas when the weather is bad. *Some* small companies are not well managed.

Should you find, however, that you are not as successful as Cyril and that you don't possess the rather special nature and outlook of the speciality salesman then it will be a bit too late to remember with nostalgic affection that great helpful, friendly Company which, had you been able to realise the fact, was supplying you with incentive unlimited.

Sincerely,

STUART

RECORDING IS ESSENTIAL

Dear Arthur,

Knowing how vocal you can become, I can guess pretty accurately what you would say about an hotel manager who failed to keep a record of having booked a room for you. Allocations in hotels are based on booking records.

What would you think of your bank manager if he informed you that his branch was no longer going to render you a statement of your account?

The police would be in a mess, wouldn't they, if they were unable to produce evidence of the charge when the prisoner was brought before the magistrate?

What would you think of your Head Office if they failed to record, and execute, orders received from clients in your territory?

I ask these questions because of your strong reaction to the subject of record keeping when applied to you and because of your sometimes openly expressed derision on the subject of reports. You get very upset when your Sales Manager suggests that you do not keep proper records and reports of your work.

Apart from the value of records to your future income, the requisite details are of the utmost value to your Company. You are employed as a salesman. As such, the Company has obligations to fulfil to you and you have obligations to fulfil to them.

One of these obligations is to be prepared to co-operate in supplying details of your work.

You can no more blame your Sales Manager for being irritated at your dilatoriness than you could be blamed

for being irritated with your Bank if they showed reluctance to produce a statement of your affairs.

Of course, if you have an agreed arrangement whereby you are not required to render reports, or if you are asked to supply finicky and irrelevant detail, or if you are requested to supply the necessary information, not once, but two or three times, and each in a different way, then you do have reason to be annoyed if "chased".

But when all you are asked to do is to keep simple record cards up to date, make out one report on each call and submit your account (for double checking with Sales Office records—to avoid an oversight by one party or the other) of your monthly turnover figures, it is a waste of your nervous energy to be so irate. These requisites are part of your job. They are as necessary to you as they are to your Sales Manager.

Sincerely,

STUART

"Yes, Mr. Chumley was expecting you—he just left."

THE SALESMAN IS AN ADVOCATE

Dear Ronald,

What a pity that you didn't manage to see the B.B.C. television programme which featured Lord Birkett in "Face to Face". You missed a very interesting half-hour.

John Freeman asked numerous questions and, in the answering of these questions, Lord Birkett supplied the background to his life's work, his interests and his beliefs.

Lord Birkett is, as you know, one of the outstanding public men of our time. He won a scholarship from his grammar school to Cambridge and became one of the most famous barristers of his day. Later he became a Judge. He has also been a Member of Parliament. The number of public appointments he has held have been numerous. In 1959 he was Chairman of the printing industry talks.

Unfortunately, I have not a script or a tape recording of that half-hour's television programme. However, I clearly remember John Freeman asking Lord Birkett what period of his rich and varied life he most enjoyed. He said the days when he was in court, as a barrister. John Freeman asked him why.

Lord Birkett said because, to him, *there had been no experience which gave him so much personal satisfaction as pleading a cause*. He stated that it was an exhilarating feeling to stand up in front of a jury and persuade them to his point of view. Both defending and prosecuting counsel had the facts and the training and opportunity to interpret those facts to the jury. His own particular responsibility was to sway the jury to his point of view and it was a fascinating task. He also added a rider by saying that so much of the groundwork, the supplying of

details, was done by solicitors that it left the barrister free to concentrate on winning people to his point of view.

The Sunday Times ran a series of articles on Great Advocates. C. G. L. Du Cann, who wrote the article on Sir Edward Marshall-Hall, described him as a genius of the bar. Referring to Marshall-Hall's treatment of a jury the following words were used: "With the fervour of a Hebrew prophet, he would kindle them to his own passionate partisanship." Elsewhere the author wrote: "Because he was moved to the very depths of his being, he could inflame (or infect) others. More than one judge listening to him is on record as having wept." Again, "The jury had to be restrained from applause by the shocked usher."

Now a salesman is not a barrister, but he is certainly an advocate for his Company, his products and the cause that he presents to a prospect. Maybe no salesman has produced tears of sympathy from a prospect, for one can hardly visualise circumstances where tears would be warranted. Many good salesmen, though, have aroused in prospects a high degree of emotional response to the story that they unfold.

Salesmen are the advocates of the commercial market and it is profitable for them to model much of their approach to their work, and their conduct of life, on the methods of the barrister.

They have to work with facts and they are completely at liberty to present and interpret the facts to their own advantage, provided they are convinced that what they say is also to the advantage of the prospect. They are entitled to be emotional about the service they can render, and to work upon the prospect's emotions regarding the latter's needs and wants. From start to finish the

salesman's role is to win his case, convinced that in so doing he is being of service.

He has to enthuse others and obtain from them favourable decisions.

Like the barrister, much of a salesman's detailed work is done for him. This is undertaken by his Head Office by way of product information and other data.

The barrister has to plan his case, the salesman should plan his sale.

Practically all barristers are men of the highest integrity, and so are most salesmen. They have a lot in common.

Sincerely,
STUART

IT'S A TELEPHONE—NOT A PAPERWEIGHT

Dear Bill,

That squat object on your desk, the telephone, is not, strangely enough, intended to be a paperweight which talks. I know it's handy enough for calling up the blonde around the block or chatting with old Charlie about ice-hockey, but it wasn't put there for those purposes.

The main idea of an interested but reasonably benevolent management was to supply you with a sales aid for obtaining business. Incidentally, if you like the sound of bells, don't wait for those of your telephone to tinkle. You may wait a long time. Much better you ring somebody.

Although the telephone can never take the place of talking to the prospect face to face, it is no mean substi-

tute and often it is a method by which you get face to face with the prospect.

You told me you'd heard Benny Goodman and Sid Phillips playing the clarinet. With considerable finesse they make music and money from that instrument. Well, the telephone's an instrument too, and can certainly help you to make money if not music.

Very often you can get right through to the prospect. If you can develop a good telephone technique, you can sell yourself an appointment with the prospect. Do not try to sell the product, *that* comes when the interview takes place, but concentrate on selling the prospect ten minutes of his time. If you are polite and get him answering "Yes, yes, yes" to lesser questions, it will be a very ungracious man who will refuse to see you.

If an order is pending, and it is slow coming through, ring the prospect but have some legitimate reason other than that of pure enquiry about the order. Give the prospect a piece of helpful information or ask his advice about some point. You needn't necessarily mention your expected order. He will catch on. You've supplied a tactful reminder.

Do you know what your voice sounds like? Have you the faintest idea? Get it recorded, you may be surprised. Your accent isn't important but your voice control and inflection certainly is.

Of course if you think so little of the telephone that you never condescend to use it, then a pet marmoset would look much more attractive on your desk. If you use the telephone incorrectly, then better not to use it at all. But if you can put it to work effectively, then it will certainly help your sales increase.

Sincerely,

STUART

SO YOU DON'T OWN A CAR

Dear Percy,

When we were talking the other night you made a remark about motor cars which has prompted me to write you on the subject. You said you felt awkward and embarrassed when you called upon an out of town prospect and, not having a car, had to walk up to the main office door. If you feel like this then the matter is serious because it will affect your selling confidence and power, although I'm quite sure that owning a car does not make a man a better salesman or even a good one.

In certain types of areas constant mobility over considerable distance is essential and there are numerous instances where a car is a necessity for making sufficient calls. A car or van is also very necessary if you have to carry round equipment or bulky sample cases.

As you know, selling circumstances dictate that a number of Companies supply their salesmen with vehicles and this proves good sales costing from the Company's viewpoint in appropriate cases.

You, however, are an advertisement space salesman working for a Company that does not supply you with a car and, anyway, you only have a dispatch case to carry. You told me you didn't want a second-hand crock and, with a growing family, you feel you cannot afford a new car. In that case you'll just have to get along without your own car and it should not affect your selling unless you get yourself a complex about the matter.

Look at it this way. Much of your work takes place in the centre of London and you are continually on the move from one prospect to another. In these circum-

stances a car is a positive impediment as you can spend hours a day looking for parking places in between calls.

What about the times you go to such places as Slough, Aylesbury or Maidstone? Well, if public transport is poor you can hire a taxi and the same applies if the weather is very bad. If you want to you can hire a self-drive car for the day.

If you were to add up the cost of using transport in this way, including the taking of taxis in London when it is essential, you would find that you have mobility at a cost considerably lower than running your own car if you include such items as depreciation, repairs, insurance and tax.

You mentioned to me an instance where you felt "awkward" because you had to walk along a country road to a large factory where you had an appointment with the Advertising Manager. You seemed to be under the impression that he was gazing out of a window, staring at your pedestrian efforts through a pair of binoculars. You said that after the interview was over he came to the main door to bid you farewell and you thought he must have wondered why you didn't leave by car. So what?

There is but one attitude, one logical outlook, to take in this kind of thing and it is coupled with hard reality.

If you obtained an order you succeeded in your mission and whether you walked away, rode away on a camel or trotted backwards was entirely your business. The client's business was the order he had passed to you. The obtaining of that order was your reason for the journey. If you didn't get the order what good would it have done you, as a young salesman, to have been driven away in a chauffeur-driven Rolls? Would it make the prospect change his mind? Would it?

If you are letting the absence of a car affect your selling it shows you are putting the wrong emphasis on the quality needed to make a sale. The core of your work begins when you are person to person across the prospect's desk. How you arrive there is a secondary consideration.

Sincerely,
STUART

ON GAZING AT GREEN FIELDS

Dear Russell,

Perhaps I shouldn't tell you this but do you know what they're saying about you at Head Office? Well, they're talking of sending you a pair of binoculars for a Christmas present so that you can extend your green field gazing.

Apparently you've been so busy craning your neck over Bill and Charlie's pastures that you're getting quite a name for being dissatisfied with your territory and its possibilities. Certainly you are not the first man by any means to think that if you were working some other territory you would do much better. It is not an unnatural thought and yet it's just about the most dangerous idea that a trained salesman can get into his head. It is a thought which has stunted the growth of too many promising salesmen.

I know that there are a few Sales Directors who are apt to say, to men who look with longing eyes at another territory, that the grass in the next field always *seems*

greener. That another man's territory only *seems* better, bigger and more lucrative.

As for me, I'll tell you straight away that sometimes the grass in the next field really is greener and in certain fields in Kentucky it's even bluer. Quite definitely some men's territories are better than yours. And also I'll tell you this—that I know well a salesman still under forty who has a wonderful area in London for a very famous Company and who a few years ago was working cheerfully in that Company's most sluggish, dreariest area.

If I owned a large, really first-class garden do you know who I would put in charge of it? A first-class gardener, a man of proven worth, skill and experience. A man I could rely on. If I ran a night club in London's West End I would obtain the best cabaret stars that the finances would justifiably carry.

If only you could look at your territory, Jim, through impersonal eyes this is what you would see. Barren patches certainly, but so many of the patches barren through your own neglect. Prospective clients never yet called upon. Streets untrodden by you. Little gold-mines still awaiting discovery by you.

You have become depressed because you think the territory's tougher than it is and the more depressed you become the tougher the territory seems.

Your Sales Director has his eyes on you because he knows that, basically, you are first-class selling material. But I'll tell you what he's waiting for. He's waiting for you to get dug into that territory of yours and start making it look a bit greener through proper cultivation. Gazing into other fields will not help you one little bit. You just concentrate on your own grass.

When your Sales Director can say to himself, "Jim's doing a much better than average job on his territory,

he's really producing," your future is assured and you will find yourself being moved upwards because the first-class men are wanted in the top territories.

Your present territory is *your opportunity*.

So don't strain your eyesight any more.

Sincerely,

STUART

"Now for the first exercise in the art of aggressive selling I want you to imagine you're the prospective Labour candidate for Woodford."

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THE IMPORTANCE OF INCENTIVE

Dear Tony,

You aspire, you tell me, to become a Sales Manager. It should interest you, then, to know what Sales Managers consider to be their most important responsibilities.

As sales depend on salesmen, there can be little doubt that a Sales Manager must always be concerned with the performance and turnover of the Company salesmen on the road.

He should always be trying to find out the best method of encouraging and helping his men.

Sales Managers, however, have many calls upon their time and attention. How would they list these in order of importance? I do not know what the British priority list would be, but I can quote an American authority.

The National Sales Executives, Inc., of the U.S.A., sent out a questionnaire to their members. This is what was published in a later issue of the *N.S.E. News*:

"Approximately 85% of returns have been tallied from the recent NSE questionnaire asking members to pinpoint the salient problems of sales management. At this stage it is evident that the sales executive is preoccupied primarily with problems revolving about the salesman—selecting and training him and generally channelling his efforts toward more profitable performance.

"Final figures should not vary appreciably from the preliminary tally. They give NSE an up-to-date guide for accurately targeting member information services, including the Sales Idea File mailings, to these areas of greatest sales executive interest. Results also serve as a direction finder for the Board of Trustees of the NSE

Graduate School of Sales Management and Marketing and the Field Sales Management Institute in establishing curriculum requirements and for the programme committee of the 1959 Convention in New Orleans. They will provide invaluable advice for experts on the NSE Speakers' Roster as to pertinent subject matter for talks before clubs.

"Questionnaires designate the following as sales management's top 15 problems areas in order of frequency of mention:

1. Effective motivation—incentives for salesmen.
2. Increasing effective selling time.
3. Development of creative selling techniques.
4. Training and performance evaluation.
5. Effective sales supervision practices.
6. Recruitment, interviewing and selection.
7. Planning successful sales meetings.
8. Betterment of salesmen's attitudes.
9. Proper use of sales promotion aids.
10. Effective sales forecasting techniques.
11. Development of sales supervisors.
12. Profitable sales analysis—by salesmen.
13. Measuring the impact of competitive practices.
14. Setting of equitable sales quotas.
15. Territory—account coverage—results."

You'll gather from this that a Sales Manager's job may be somewhat more exacting than you have previously considered it.

Sincerely,

STUART

SECURE ORDERS!

Dear Keith,

As you know, I write a letter to a salesman friend of mine every month. It happens that this month's letter is one of the shortest I have ever written.

It has just one object—to suggest that you will obtain a lot of valuable advice if you study the views Mr. R. Isdell-Carpenter, when Sales Director of A.E.I.-Hotpoint Ltd., embodied in a speech he made on 20th October, 1958, at the Royal Festival Hall in London. The occasion was a conference organised by the Incorporated Sales Managers Association on "Alerting Management for a Salesmanship Economy", and Mr. Isdell-Carpenter addressed the conference on "The Market is What You Make It—By Salesmanship".

I was so impressed with what he said that I asked him if I could reprint the full text of his speech, which was divided into two sections. He spoke first of the responsibilities of a Sales Director, and went on to talk about the duties of a salesman. What he said is printed in an appendix*—you will find it very well worth reading.

Sincerely,

STUART

* *The full text of Mr. Isdell-Carpenter's speech can be found in the appendix to this book, starting on page 178.*

IT'S COFFEE TIME

Dear Brynn,

Some of us were talking a couple of days ago about the attraction that coffee and tea breaks have for certain men on the road.

The consensus of opinion seemed to be that, generally speaking, salesmen aren't quite the iron men that some people would like them to become.

One of the group correctly said that practically every office worker has coffee or tea in the morning and again in the afternoon, and in view of the nervous and physical energy expended by the men on the road there's no reason to suppose that salesmen should be more austere than anyone else. Then somebody else pointed out that office executives generally had their tea served at their desks and lost very little working time, whereas some salesmen stopped work for lengthy periods to cogitate upon the perils of the day.

There appeared to be agreement on the following points:

1. It probably did no harm for a salesman to have a *brief* break in a hard-working morning and afternoon providing the time was used to refresh himself for a further display of energy. During these few minutes he should make his notes and think over the coming calls. If this was the case then the time might be considered to be well used.

2. It was fatal to take a break if the salesman got into the habit of doing crossword puzzles, reading a novel, mental dozing or filling in football coupons. *Five to ten minutes too easily became twenty to thirty minutes and the mind was miles away from the job.*

3. It became very damaging if a salesman began to

adopt the attitude of hurrying through an interview or postponing his next call because it was "coffee time". When this occurred the man was putting his refreshment before his Company's and his own self-interest.

4. That the great majority of salesmen were reliable adults who were judged by results. If a mature man reasonably decided the circumstances of that day's selling permitted him to take a cup of coffee or tea, then he was the best judge of the matter. His conscience and common sense were the deciding factors. If he was a coffee shop waster, then he would, anyway, find some other method of throwing away his time if there was no café to wake up in.

One man made a comment that set us all thinking.

Someone had said, with understandable humanity, that salesmen get a bit jaded and it was natural that they should want a break.

The answer to this was: "Well, all I can say is that you should meet my brother-in-law. He spends more time off the road than on. He's a real Espresso Charlie. *He takes it so easy that it's simple to understand why he thinks selling's so hard.* But just wait till he gets home to work on his secondhand sports car. In the evenings and during week-ends he's so engrossed and intrigued in stripping it and re-assembling it that he misses entire meals and won't even stop for a cigarette. He's so keen on that car that if you interrupted him with a cup of coffee he'd probably chuck it in your face.

"I guarantee that if he had the same enthusiasm for selling he wouldn't visit so many cafés when he was on the road. He'd be too busy to spare the time for coffee."

That's certainly a point of view worth thinking over.

Sincerely,

STUART

ELATION AND DEPRESSION

Dear Roger,

Securing a large order, even establishing a record with an individual order, does not make a man a successful salesman. Failure to obtain what should have been a certain order does not mean that a man is a bad salesman.

There are plenty of cases of great batsmen being bowled for a duck and there are some instances of tail-enders scoring centuries. What counts in the long run is continuity of performance. The law of averages can be as surely applied in selling as in many other fields of endeavour.

It is very noticeable, though, how a run of success and a period of tough going can produce a similar result from the attitudes of certain salesmen. Both peak and barren periods begin to produce a mental reaction which lessens the sales effort, and this is particularly apparent in the man of somewhat mercurial temperament.

Things have been going very well and business is brisk. There comes the tendency to think that this state of affairs will proceed smoothly into the dim and distant future. The salesman feels prosperous and content and he eases up in his work. "I've never had it so good, why push myself? Business will roll in." *So he slackens off and so do his orders.*

When confronted with the opposite situation, the same salesman finds that his reactions are not dissimilar. He has been working quite industriously but the returns have been poor. Days go by and he becomes depressed, and not without reason. Then arrives the time when he says, "Oh! what's the good of going on? Nothing's com-

ing right. I'm wasting my time working like this. No point in making the effort." And so he slackens off.

To a greater or lesser extent I think all of us salesmen are affected by these feelings of elation and depression. *They are inescapable in selling. Both of them carry germs that breed inactivity. Things are going very well so we can ease up. Things are going badly so why work so hard?*

It is not at all easy to avoid falling into these pitfalls. We have to be on guard constantly.

Continuity of effort is essential in selling. The salesman who eases up, after a successful period, can never maintain for himself a high rating and income. Success cannot be achieved by working hard and slacking off at rhythmic intervals.

Every good salesman has experienced periods when his returns have been very low. The man of calibre realises, however, that whilst he may feel a bit depressed by a run of poor business, he must not allow his feelings to affect the continuity or quality of his work. If he slackens off, if lack of enthusiasm is apparent, he realises a temporary setback may become permanent.

Successful salesmen draw encouragement from their average figures. They know that to keep working energetically, in good times and bad, is the one way to maintain and then improve their average figures.

What a man sold or failed to sell yesterday does not form any reasonable basis of judging his sales ability.

The only criterion is the working of the law of averages. How does he perform over a month, a quarter, a half-year or a year? It is in the answer to these questions that the ability of a man can be gauged.

Sincerely,

STUART

KEEPING ON THE MOVE

Dear Hugh,

"Go, Go, Go."

The rock 'n' roll beat, and its jargon, may not be heard quite so frequently now as in the last few years, but it is still around.

When it really Rocked Around The Clock, the beat blasted out in practically every espresso on the asphalt jungle and in the homes of many sedate suburbanites.

The merits or weaknesses of such a pattern of musical presentation are of no concern in this letter to you. It so happens, however, that as I passed a record shop in London the other day, I was once again assailed by the words "Go, Go, Go".

As I padded on my way to keep my appointment, the repetitive use of the word "Go" remained embedded in the mind.

There was, surely, a message for salesmen. One may loathe rock, skiffle, mood music or modern jazz, but one cannot escape the impact of that word "Go".

As far as selling is concerned, it can mean just this.

If one wants orders one has to go out and get them.

To go out one has to have somewhere to go. The obvious places for salesmen to visit are the business premises of prospects.

Going implies mobility. To keep business on the move a salesman has to be out and about. The more people of the right type he talks to, the more business will he obtain.

Orders are secured by active selling. *Without enough calls and contacts the tools of selling cannot be sufficiently operated.*

There are many occasions when time is lost through no fault of the salesman concerned.

There also occur many instances when salesmen have to be at their desks in order to plan and prepare for the calls they intend to make. They also have considerable paper-work, resulting from calls actually made. This, of course, is not lost time. It is part of the job.

Few will deny, however, that it is very easy, and sometimes exceedingly tempting, to fritter away time, to procrastinate and to think of all sorts of reasons for not being out on the road selling.

Income is built from sales. The indication of a salesman's future lies in the authenticity of his growing ability to obtain orders. To the speciality salesman, the telephone and the letter are valuable adjuncts to what should be his main activity. That is seeing personally as many prospects as possible. It is from meeting people, talking to them and convincing them that sales are made.

To a greater or lesser extent every one of us could put in more calls on appropriate prospects.

Therefore, those of us who are prone to make a New Year Resolution—and make some effort to fulfil it—might do worse than harness the implication of resolve in that thrice repeated word "Go, Go, Go".

Sincerely,

STUART

SO YOU WANT YOUR OWN COMPANY

Dear Trevor,

Think it over. Think round it, under it and then think again. Consult some of your most sensible friends, take your wife fully into your confidence and obtain the advice of your bank manager and your solicitor.

When you've done all these things then write down the pros and cons of the situation, carefully and at length. Put your notes away and study them again in two months' time.

When you are considering going into business on your own account you cannot afford to make decisions based on impetuosity, false optimism or an unbalanced viewpoint of the factors involved.

I am not saying that you should not form your own Company. If people of initiative were not prepared to take risks, make sacrifices and work tremendously hard then private enterprise would die.

It does no harm, though, to realise that not everyone who launches his own business makes a success of the enterprise. Not every salesman is aware of all the factors involved in financing, planning and managing a business.

I mention this because I believe, in your particular case, there is a distinct possibility that you have a bit of a chip on your shoulder and this is what is influencing you. You work, as a salesman, for a Public Company and, at the age of thirty-five, you think you should be earning more money especially as you have a young family at an expensive stage of development.

I am assuming that you have got, or can raise, the necessary capital involved. Allowing for this, do you realise that several years are likely to pass, always sup-

posing the successful outcome of your enterprise, before you can expect to pay yourself as much as you are at present earning?

You are also aware that you have a chance of obtaining, some time in the future, an Area Managership in your present Company. You say it may not be for years! But then, of course, it might be next year. Who knows? I don't and you don't.

Discontent is not necessarily a bad thing at all. It's often a spur to progress. The trouble is that when we're in the mood to dwell upon and list all the things which cause us discontent, we're seldom in the mood to think of the advantages we at present enjoy.

In your case you should I think consider these factors as they relate to your situation.

You work for a Company of repute whose products are of quality. Your Company has expanded over the years. It backs you to the full. *Such is the weight of its support to its sales force that sometimes I wonder if you and your colleagues appreciate how much more difficult your lives would be if you lacked this support.*

You have the use of a Company car which is a tangible benefit. Your remuneration, while causing you concern, is the envy of some of your friends. You will have handsome pension rights which many salesmen will not obtain. If you have the misfortune to be ill for a prolonged period you know that your Company will see that you do not suffer financially. Then there is one further consideration, of immense importance. *In a Company the size of the one you work for there is a great scope for personal advancement. Sometimes I think you neglect or minimise this aspect. Practically every senior executive in your firm has come up through the ranks.*

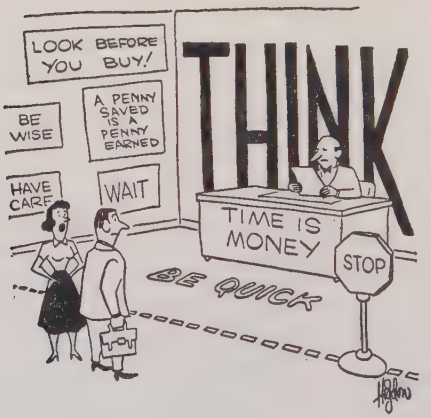
You have not got to look outside for rewards and

opportunities. They are with you now—where you are. If you want to make more money you have the opportunity to do so on ground you know. There are other reasons than money which lead men to strike out on their own but these do not appear to influence you.

I do not say you should not go into business on your own account. However, I think it is extremely important for you to weigh up all the considerations involved and reach a conclusion based on a proper assessment of your present situation and future expectations.

Sincerely,

STUART



"He's a hard one to sell."

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

Dear Bob,

As you persist in spattering your reports with the words "A Good Interview", I don't see why you should be quite so pained because your Sales Manager has raised the matter with you.

Apparently he handed back to you seventeen reports. He had circled, in red ink, the phrase "A Good Interview", which appeared in each report. Then he asked you why you thought the interviews recorded in these reports were all good. Not satisfied with your explanation he said that *he preferred reports which kept to facts and did not proffer personal theories.*

I can understand your being upset and if your Sales Manager had not been rushing off to catch a train to Manchester, he would, I am sure, have been less curt. It seems to me, though, that you brought the whole thing on yourself.

An occasional use of the words "Good Interview" would probably have produced no adverse comment. But you so overdid it that you have created the belief that you lack a proper sense of evaluation.

The impression given by your reports is that you are overcome with joy at being seen at all. You appear to be so gratified that a prospect is pleasant to you that you write up your reports as though you were describing sales triumphs of the first magnitude.

There are, of course, good interviews and bad interviews. In the main there are only four types of interviews which can justify the designation—A Good Interview. They are (1) *When an order is secured.* (2) *When an order is definitely promised.* (3) *When it is reasonably*

clear that additional work will probably secure an order, and (4) *when the prospect renders you a service such as supplying you with an introduction to some other prospect or gives you some valuable advice.*

I think your Sales Manager was being cruel to be kind. His object was to jolt you to a state of reality. Had he not drawn your attention to the wording of your reports there was the real danger that you would come to believe that ordinary run-of-the-mill interviews, from which you obtained no apparent business, were "good interviews".

If this was your assessment, then there would be little likelihood of your improving your work. He wished to point out to you, quite forcibly and with justification, that your standards of satisfaction were too low.

I mentioned, just now, four types of good interviews. Providing you write your reports accurately it will, anyway, be unnecessary for you to describe your rating of the interview. *Trained Sales Managers have acquired the ability to grasp the significance of practically every report they read. Apart from absorbing the facts, they develop considerable skill in sensing what led a salesman to write a report in a particular way.*

When you have got over your pique, in a day or two, I'm sure you'll realise that the criticism you received was made with the intention of helping you.

After you've had more sales experience you'll appreciate that because people receive you with courtesy it does not follow that an order will be sent on to you. You'll learn that it is unnecessary to embroider your reports with obvious indications of wishful thinking. You'll begin to have a number of genuinely good interviews and they, in turn, will be registered in good sales figures.

When your Sales Manager returns, go and see him and

ask him for fifteen minutes of his time. Then request his advice as to how he would like you to detail your reports. He will be delighted to guide you.

Sincerely,
STUART

ON ENTHUSING YOURSELF

Dear Howard,

As you know, selling as a career necessitates the use of considerable mental energy. However well a man is doing he is energetically trying to beat his previous best —at least if he is an ambitious and conscientious worker.

You are not at all alone when, sometimes, you notice a feeling of staleness coming over you. It happens to the most experienced of salesmen although they generally have a successful method of coping with the temporary problem.

Sometimes fate is kind. Unexpectedly a big order materialises and this acts as a distinct tonic. Unhappily, the reverse can occur and an anticipated order fails to be booked. When this takes place it can certainly have a depressing effect on the younger or less successful man. Bad news does not seem to affect the star salesman greatly because he knows that it is the average which is the figure of true assessment value.

Nevertheless, selling does demand a call upon reserves of nervous energy. This necessitates creating reserves upon which to draw. Without such a reserve the salesman will, inevitably, become quickly expendable.

It is one of the responsibilities of your Sales Manager

to see that you and your colleagues benefit from all the enthusiasm he can impart. You can also draw encouragement from reading books on salesmanship. Books which record the experience of other men, all of whom have had to face similar problems to yourself.

Valuable as these aids are, it is a poor salesman who cannot re-charge his own batteries of energy and enthusiasm. Worry and nervous tension will not help you. They are destructive, not creative.

You should find yourself some quiet place and concentrate your thoughts upon your product.

You must dwell, very consciously, on all its good points. You should consider all the things which make it different and preferable to the goods of your competitors. Focus in your mind the very fine value it offers for money expended. Recall all the satisfied clients and consider all the prospects who have yet to buy.

You ought to think of the positive, beneficial work you have done in the past and which you will be doing in the future. You should think of the real good you have done to people through selling, and the service or pleasure rendered by your product.

The more you think along these lines the greater will be the feeling of energy and enthusiasm throbbing through you. It is impossible to hold these thoughts with sincerity and not possess a belief that to sell is creative, inspirational and good.

If you are sure you are doing something worth while you will be supplied, inevitably, with energy and enthusiasm to tackle the work.

Sincerely,

STUART

A STRANGER IN PARADISE

Dear Sydney,

You know those times when life seems normal—and then something occurs to jolt the gentle flow of events.

The incident I'm going to tell you about in no way sways my opinion that the great majority of salesmen are mature, intelligent and reliable people but it does confirm the wisdom of that old adage "there's an exception to every rule".

If it hadn't happened in reality then, looking back on it, I wouldn't have been surprised to have seen this incident in a Boulting Brothers comedy.

One recent morning in London, at about 9.35 a.m., a salesman cannonades into a small stationery shop. He scatters the few clients into a forest of greeting-card stands, strides up to the counter where he slams his bag down with such a concussive wallop that some boxes of envelopes topple off a shelf.

Two girls are behind the counter and they are boomingly greeted with cries of, "Mornin' to you. Mornin' my beauties all. Where's the Big Man?" One of the girls points to a tiny office at the end of the shop where the proprietor is speaking on the telephone.

"Haven't seen you for ages," says one of the assistants. "Where've you been? What's been happening to you?"

The man beams with florid pleasure. He doesn't answer the question but winks and wags a finger at the girl.

Then, most unexpectedly, he lets forth an ear-piercing whistling rendering of "A Stranger in Paradise". This uncanny event, so early in the day, holds the few

customers transfixed but the two shop assistants twitter with delight.

While he waits for the proprietor to come off the telephone the man then entertains the two girls, who obviously consider him a real card, with heavy-handed banter.

The interests of the customers are obliterated and the personality of this exuberant type completely permeates the shop.

When the proprietor comes out of his office the man bounds towards him like a cheery tame bear, and says, "Remember me? How could you ever forget, eh? Well, what can I do you for to-day? And how are you, how are you? I see you've not been 'taken over' yet but roll on the day. Now, I've got a nice little line in my bag. Very profitable. You'll get to the Riviera on this line, take my word for it. What? You don't say! You don't want anything. Well, I'll be seeing you."

He picks up his bag and walks out with loud cries of, "Bye, bye all." He was irrepressible, irredeemable and irrational.

Had someone told me this, had I not seen it myself, I would have thought, "That's just the story of someone who has got it all mixed up." But it really happened.

Now I know, and you know, that this kind of man "on the road" is a very rare occurrence indeed. When one does come on a case like this one realises how very competent most salesmen are.

Sincerely,

STUART

"LET'S GO ON AND MAKE IT BETTER"

Dear Maurice,

Successful professional racing drivers achieve international fame. They lead a life that is dangerous, exciting and glamorous. They engage in a sport of considerable personal risk. They deserve the respect that they earn.

It might be supposed, by the layman, that the last thing a racing driver needs to do is to keep detailed records and notes. People might be excused for assuming that these brave men do not have to give much thought and study to their work. I think the popular conception is that the driver steps into a powerful car, prepared by expert technicians, puts his foot down and then goes hell for leather. By a combination of guts, skill and chance he may win.

According to Stirling Moss, the establishment of a first-class performance, by a racing driver, needs the same preparation, care, thought and application as in any other calling.

He wrote a long and fascinating article in the *Daily Express* on 26th January, 1959. He outlined his stages of preparation, how he planned his tactics and what his thoughts were during the race. Concerning the event, he said, "This is the race itself, where all the excitement that went before—everything that's gone before, the years that have gone before, the experience and the work—all come into being."

After describing the emergencies for which he has to be prepared he wrote: "Apart from this there is the tremendous spirit of competition—of beating the other man, perhaps of beating the lap record, or beating the race average speed."

Afterwards, and of most pertinent interest, he wrote:

"The race is over now, and this one I've won, so the story has a happy ending. The first thing I'll do is tell my manager, Mr. Reg. Parnell, what the car felt like and perhaps other suggestions for improvements. Perhaps the car would run better with a higher or a lower third gear, and in my elation at having won I'm explaining to him that the car is good but we mustn't stop here; let's go on and make it better.

"Eventually I put all this into the book that I always keep, which shows the axle ratio that I'm using, the tyre pressures, the grade of plugs, what worth I'm getting out of what corner, so that in years to come, or maybe only in months to come, I can look back and say: *Right, I was going through that corner faster then, or slower then, and so on; I must have made improvements or perhaps I'm not going quite so fast as I should.*"

Elsewhere he said: "We will stop on the roadside for a cup of tea and to relax and discuss the race. If I've done well, I normally talk about the race up until two or three hours afterwards. If I haven't done too well, then I still talk about it."

From these quotations you will realise the tremendous amount of planning, thought and analysis that a top racing driver puts into his work.

Selling is not a physically dangerous job, but it can be a very exciting one. *No successful salesman has reached his position without taking great care and thought.*

There are certain parallels to be drawn between the attitude of Stirling Moss in his sphere and those of the successful salesman.

For instance, the actual call on the prospect and the process of sale is the combination of everything that's gone before—the planning and the experience. *Then*

there is the healthy spirit of competition in selling, the breaking of existing records and the establishment of new ones.

I was very impressed with Stirling Moss's references to the detailed record-keeping that he undertook. Every factor, consideration and detail that could affect his future performance is noted and filed. If a man of his eminence finds it necessary to do this paper-work, then surely no salesman can avoid the necessity of keeping his own records accurate and up to date.

Then you will see that Stirling Moss holds an exhaustive self-inquest after every race. Win or lose, he discusses and surveys what has occurred.

I hope you will agree that this famous driver, who has done so much for British prestige, sets an example of dedication to his work that can inspire all of us who are "on the road" in a somewhat different and less dangerous capacity.

Sincerely,

STUART

BUYING A LUNCH WON'T BUY AN ORDER

Dear Walter,

Well, what did you expect? How can you be surprised at the firm ridding itself of that youthful Don Juan!

He goes and takes some gorgeous brunette to lunch at The Savoy, with what object I can only hazard a guess. She was the secretary to the Managing Director of his most important prospect or, to be more accurate, ex-prospect. The old man rings up the Sales Director and talks about your Company's young salesmen trying to make passes at members of his staff. Then to cap the whole calamitous act your now departed friend puts in an expense account, quite openly it must be admitted, bearing the words "entertaining Mr. Jones's secretary at The Savoy". He appended sentences saying this was to "influence business". And now he's no longer with the firm and you're surprised.

Admittedly, this is a very exaggerated case of "entertainment expenses" and is far removed from the normal run of events. It does, however, highlight a point about selling upon which my feelings are very strong in this "expense"-ridden age. I believe the amount of money wasted on entertaining *prospects*, as distinct from clients, is fantastic and is only equalled by the amount of wishful thinking existent that makes a man feel that buying a prospect a good lunch helps him get an order. One hears far too many men, generally of the less stable type, saying if only they could take out Smith or Jones or Brown to lunch they would get an order. Says who? Not Smith or Jones or Brown for three.

If a man has not got a proposition that is acceptable when told in the prospect's office then he has not got a

proposition at all and a background of Italian or Cypriot waiters is not going to make his case any stronger. If the order is obtainable then it can be obtained at the prospect's place of business and if it is unobtainable, or very, very difficult, taking the prospect to lunch will not make the slightest difference.

Indeed, it may make the ultimate task harder. The prospect may come to lunch but, later on, he may feel under some sense of obligation and will make polite excuses to avoid seeing the salesman again. What started off as a good sales lead has, because of the lunch, come to a bad end.

There are, of course, many occasions when entertaining is a wise pleasure. It may well be a good thing to take an important client to lunch or dinner. This helps to cement already friendly relations and may ease the negotiation of further business at a later date. But both the client and the salesman know that the original business was obtained without any efforts of social ingratiation.

The "get his order by standing him lunch, old boy" salesman will only obtain two things from his line of reasoning. A free lunch and a pocketful of disillusionment. The free lunches will come to a speedy end and the disillusionment last for ever.

You can't sell by paying a lunch bill, you can only sell by selling.

The time for dining or lunching with a prospect is after he becomes a client.

Sincerely,

STUART

HIS OWN MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Dear Paddy,

So you want to be a Manager! Well, you are one right now, or should be. Managing what? Managing yourself and your own sales affairs, controlling your own personal sales promotion activities.

You know, Paddy, as well as I do, that there are quite a number of our fellow salesmen who not only think, but categorically state, that they could do a far better job than whoever happens to be their Sales Manager. Have you ever noticed with what expedition and *élan* they sales-manage themselves? You'll have to use your magnifying glass.

For the highly successful, well-organised salesman who believes that he works under a Sales Manager less capable than himself, it is reasonable to have some sympathy. But not much—for the following reasons. The man concerned, if he's as good as he thinks he is, will most certainly become a Sales Manager if he really wants to do so.

This type of man, anyway, generally sees to it that he works under a good Sales Manager and therefore eliminates any sense of frustration. Thirdly, he is far too busy and interested in doing his own job effectively to have the time or the inclination to concern himself overmuch with the activities of other people.

The Manager's most vocal critics are those salesmen who appear to have plenty of time and mental energy to spare. Considering their own duties far too tawdry to be worthy of much consideration, and the polish of their own individual performances beyond reproach, they become experts on other people's management!

In view of the fact that a large number of these gentlemen could not manage one docile goldfish, with a small bowl as its territory, their value as coffee-house advisers is somewhat limited.

The very first responsibility a *potential* Sales Manager has got is the management of himself. In this respect he is very much in business with the full responsibilities of management.

As a salesman on the road, he has to manage his time, organise his territory, keep his records up to date, and check on his own morale. He has to tabulate his turnover figures, estimate potentials, radiate self-confidence and inspire others. When he does all these things really well, then he may be in a position to talk of other people's managerial responsibilities. Certainly he'll never be capable of acting as a Sales Manager until he can manage himself.

So, Paddy, in managing your own activities you've got quite a lot on your plate.

Sincerely,

STUART

LIKE WHAT YOU SELL

Dear Chris,

One of the surest ways of liking selling as a career is to like what you sell. It is of great advantage to be really interested and attracted by the industry or trade in which you sell.

Sometimes when a man seems a bit unhappy in his job, and uncertain as to his ability, it is not his fault. Nor is it the fault of the job itself or his actual conditions of employment.

A man may be hard-working and conscientious, he may genuinely appreciate the value of the product he sells, but he, himself, feels no absorption in his career. He does not find fulfilment in his work and develops a mood which is unsettling.

When this develops he may very possibly begin to think, and then believe, that selling is not the career for him, that he doesn't like selling and that he'll never become a good salesman. In the circumstances outlined, this reaction is not unnatural. It is not, necessarily, logical.

Very often the basic cause for discontent is not connected with selling, as such. It is directly linked to the fact that he is working in an industry or trade in which he has little or no mental affinity. His mental interests are such that he cannot give himself with enthusiasm because, although he may represent a worthy Company, he is not really attracted to the field which it serves.

A man who is a partial failure as a life insurance salesman might well be in his element selling agricultural equipment to farmers. A man selling textiles might have

been much happier, and more successful, had he sold office equipment.

Whilst it is important for a salesman to know he is with a good firm, and has its backing, he owes it to himself to make sure that he is working in an industry in which he has a real interest—or in which he feels he can acquire an interest. Paints are necessary to an artist but he has to have a canvas to work upon and a subject which appeals to him.

There must be men who have the idea that they would be happier if only they could change their type of selling activity but who, owing to a chain of circumstances, think that they cannot bring about the desired change. They feel they must stay where they are.

In such cases they can only benefit from trying to acquire a livelier curiosity about, and interest in, their present occupation. If one takes two men of equivalent ability in, say, the shoe trade, the man who has developed a keen interest in that trade will find more personal happiness than his colleague who lacks interest. He will also outsell him.

Apart from purely personal attributes there are three attitudes which greatly contribute to a man in his selling:

(1) Interest in, and knowledge of, the industry or trade which his Company serves.
(2) A knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, his Company —its past history, present policy and future plans.
(3) A strong belief in, and affection for, his Company's products.

Sincerely,

STUART

"ON THE ROAD" TO MONEY

Dear Ian,

Money! Yes, of course it's important, and it's understandable that you should wish to make money as a salesman. As a matter of fact remember we talked about the right use of money the last time we met. But before you can use it you've got to get it.

Let's exclude the subject of fortune-making. You need to be much more than even a super-salesman for that kind of thing. Financial flair, trading instinct and great shrewdness are among the necessary qualities which so many of us do not possess. I'm just confining my remarks to making money as an "employed" salesman.

I've come across a lot of men who have earned, and are earning, very considerable incomes as salesmen. From my observations I think that these men's incomes are affected by certain considerations which can be applied to you as an ambitious young salesman.

1. You must enjoy selling. You must be attracted to the industry or trade to which you sell and you must have an appreciation of your product. You must believe selling is a beneficial activity.

2. It is necessary for you to possess reasonably good health as you have to expend considerable physical and nervous energy.

3. You have to be with a Company of stability and integrity that offers a worth-while product in ratio to its cost.

4. You have to be on a fair basis of remuneration and be able to assess, sensibly, the opportunities of promotion or increased earnings either within your present Company or within industry generally. *You have to realise*

that you can't improve your income unless you increase your value as a salesman.

5. You have to be a worker and it's just as well to be reliable and apply common sense to your job.

6. Don't let temporary depressions make permanent scars.

Those are the main tools and they should be burnished with enthusiasm. The attitude of mind directing your use of the tools is of immense importance.

(*a*) Don't be in too much of a hurry to hit the big time. Impatience causes frustration, frustration causes tension and tension ruins your selling. Don't worry about becoming a super-salesman. Just concentrate on beating your previous best. If you succeed, you'll become a good salesman.

(*b*) Try and achieve a balanced judgment. Never fear to ask the advice of a man you respect.

(*c*) Concentrate, think, dream, talk and write about salesmanship. Study it. You want to make money selling, so you've got to have knowledge and the energy to apply it. Extraordinary as it seems to the gentlemen concerned, money does not go to idlers. It goes to *consistently* reliable salesmen.

(*d*) It's a mistake to fret about money. Fretting does not make it. If you don't do your job properly your desire for money will never materialise. If you work really effectively, money will come automatically and the more efficient you are as a salesman the more you will earn.

(*e*) Realise this. A man is seldom, if ever, paid less than his current market value for any length of time. If you don't really know your market value try and find out. The knowledge may chasten you.

One of the attractive things about salesmanship is that whatever the actual basis of remuneration, a man is paid

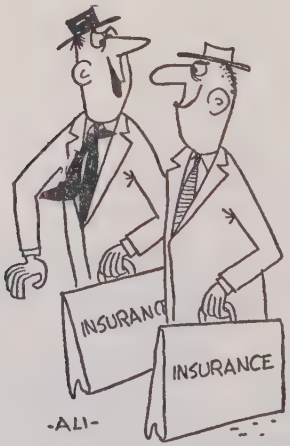
by results. In good times and bad times the able and reliable salesman is in demand.

An intelligent, presentable man of integrity, possessing reasonable health, has a somewhat better chance of obtaining and maintaining a high level of income (compared to his contemporaries) than in most other fields of endeavour.

Naturally he has to like his work. Certainly he needs the guts to be consistent and persistent. If he is always seeking to improve and if he is loyal, reliable and of steady endeavour he cannot fail to make a good income. And to make a good income you don't need to be a brilliant salesman or a very good salesman. *You just need to be a good salesman.* Look around you, Ian, and you'll see it's not that difficult.

Sincerely,

STUART



"Let's lunch at some out of the way place where we can wipe these darned smiles off our faces."

KNOW YOUR FORM

Dear Geoff,

When the letter came from Head Office this morning I have no doubt you handled it as though it were an unexploded bomb.

I know you have a horror of chitties reaching you from your H.Q. because you say that one in three of them will send you out for sufficient tranquillisers to calm down the tensions of a rogue elephant on the rampage.

You're a bit of a worrier, and perhaps that's what makes you so conscientious. I feel that probably you read far more into the fairly infrequent notes you receive from H.Q. than is ever intended that you should read. If you receive a request which says, "We would like you to make a special point of calling on Smith & Co. next Monday because they want to talk to you", you quite falsely conclude that either: (*a*) your Sales Manager thinks you have neglected Smith; or that (*b*) Smith has put in some minor complaint which your Sales Manager has treated as a major complaint. When you do see Smith you find it was a perfectly routine matter and all your fears were groundless.

Now your Sales Manager wants to see you in London. He doesn't say why. Perhaps he should have done so, but then he may have very good reasons for not telling you, in this letter, what his reasons are.

He may want to promote you; he may wish to change your territory; perhaps he wishes to increase your remuneration. It's possible he may even want your advice —strange as that may seem to your modest self.

With your record of hard work it's extremely unlikely that you are going to be hauled over the coals. *So do try*

to appear to be relaxed when you are in your Head Office.

There's another bit of advice I would like to offer. *Your Sales Manager will expect you to be as conversant with the details of your work as he is. He's got it all recorded and annotated.*

Quite casually he may ask you if you can let him know what your turnover was for each of the last three months. He will expect you to know. And he will also expect you to know how many calls you average per day, the names of your best and also least profitable customers. The more data you have about your personal performance the more will he be impressed.

You might be surprised how many men cannot supply accurate figures as to various aspects of their work. So, when you get to Head Office be in possession of the facts and figures relating to your work. *Know your form.*

Sincerely,

STUART

FIRST-CLASS FIRMS OR FATUOUS FOOLS?

Dear Robin,

One of the characteristics of Bill Jones, you'll remember that you met him for the first time the other day, is his ability to simplify life and its problems.

To him all Companies with which he deals fall into three categories.

(1) "First-class firms." These are the organisations from whom he has obtained an order.

(2) "Unknown quantities—old man." These are firms who have, as yet, made no decision concerning his products.

(3) "A bunch of fatuous fools. Incompetent, inept and hopeless. Simply don't know how or why they're still in business, old boy." These, needless to say, are the Companies from which Bill has received a flat turn-down.

He really believes in this rigid classification.

If he receives a definite "No" from a prospect, he invariably considers that the prospect is half-witted and is amazed that the man or organisation is still trading.

As you know, Bill's got quite a good record of sales. He's cheerful, reasonably competent and direct. He is also assiduous in following up Group 2—the "Unknown quantities—old man". He's anxious to satisfy his curiosity as to whether a name in Group 2 can be transferred to the honoured Group 1 assembly of "First-class firms", or whether they will have to be relegated to Group 3—"the fools".

He never seems to consider that many of the "Fatuous fools" might have been "First-class firms" but for his

personal failure to have made them so. He never really reflects and cogitates as to why he received a "No". His mind goes a complete blank when he has met with a failure. What is more he fights shy of attempting to re-open negotiations with the "Incompetent, inept and hopeless". ("Complete waste of time, old boy.") He has written them off and the fact that they may have made, last trading year, a profit of hundreds of thousands of pounds, purely confirms in his mind the roaring injustices of life.

The inability to realise that some of his sales are lost simply because he failed in his selling is totally unacceptable to him. His apparent self-confidence is unshakeable.

Self-confidence is a fine asset—essential to successful salesmanship. What Bill possesses, however, is not self-confidence but an astonishingly strong faculty for self-deception.

If he would be somewhat more critical of his own performance, and thus improve upon it, and less harsh in his judgments on those who had the temerity to say "No" to him, he would find he would get to know more "First-class firms".

Sincerely,

STUART

NO SUIT, NO SALE

Dear Reg,

If it wasn't for the fact that the unexpected so constantly happens in life I could hardly credit the information I pass on to you now—even though I write the lines myself. You may have difficulty in accepting this but I can assure you it is true.

I personally know of a decent, sober, intelligent man, hired for the purpose of selling, who acted in the following way.

Engaged by a West End Company whose salesmen have to sell to business executives, this new man, after a week or two, was seen to leave his office, with his briefcase, dressed in grey flannels and a sports coat. He was on his way to make his calls and one of them was an appointment with a most important prospect.

The Sales Director saw him leaving and, too late to speak to him, immediately went to the Sales Manager requesting him to obtain an explanation from the salesman as soon as he returned.

Now how this man was engaged, and for what he was engaged, can form no part of a letter which may be seen by other eyes than yours. The man had had previous selling experience and at the time of his selection interview had been wearing quite a reasonable suit.

When the Sales Manager saw the Sales Director in the late afternoon he said, "I've had a talk with W. and this is the position. He is having a new suit made. At the present moment he possesses only one decent suit and that is at the cleaners. He considers his only other one is so old that it is unwearable. Therefore, until he takes delivery of his new suit and gets the other one back

from the cleaners, he thought it better to go out in a good sports coat and well pressed flannels than in a worn and tatty suit."

These being the facts, the Sales Director did not dispute them.

I am sorry I cannot recount to you the reasons behind this state of affairs except to say that I think you would be sympathetic. The explanation for this paucity of clothing was not drink or gambling. Quite obviously there were contributory factors for shortage of money but they were not disreputable. W. was the kind of man who would hate owing a penny.

There are times, though, when credit and borrowing money are necessary and understandable—when to incur a debt is to create an investment. This man's livelihood is, indeed, affected by his appearance. His career and the future of his family are at stake in practically everything he does or says. He cannot afford to be shabbily attired. He literally cannot risk doing this kind of thing. Somehow, somewhere he should have raised the money or the credit (if they are not one and the same) to be properly dressed for the job.

The tragedy is that his behaviour indicates that he really has not the attitude of mind for this particular work.

Of course you won't learn anything from this—you being something of a city slicker. But perhaps you will take it from me that this kind of thing does really happen. There are men on the road who so handicap themselves.

Sincerely,

STUART

THE PRODUCT NEEDS ROMANCE

Dear Dai,

Romance gets no showing in an atmosphere devoid of imagination, lacking in colour and stripped of sentiment.

Most people know what is meant by "the romance of selling", but this generalisation has to be carried right down the line to the product itself. A man in love with his product becomes a spell-binder—the man who detests his product needs his head examined if he continues to try to sell it.

You sell a standard item of equipment whose differences from its competitors are minor variations of price, design and performance. When you tell your story to a prospect you have the feeling that other men have told a similar story before you and there will be successors in your footsteps if you do not get the order. You say it is difficult to get romantic about the product.

Well, unless you can get some imagination, colour and sentiment into your story, the product will never appear romantic and desirable to you or the prospect. What the product can do for the prospect and how much it costs are very important considerations, indeed vital considerations, but because of the general nature of your product, these factors are already pretty well known. The need for the product is well established. *Your job is to see that your product and your firm supply the acknowledged need. To do this it greatly helps you to be different as long as you are not eccentric.*

There is one obvious way of being different. Walking around with a Saluki dog is not the best method. Nor is wearing one gold ear-ring or handing out signed photographs of Marilyn Monroe. *The obvious way for a*

salesman to be different is to have a particularly fascinating, informative, compelling and distinguished sales story. A routine salesman will have a routine story. An exceptional salesman will have an exceptional story.

He is not satisfied with being able to explain the performance of his product and it is not always easy for him, with strongly competitive lines, to demonstrate great and obvious differences.

So he often talks in terms of romance. He can explain the original concept of the equipment, he can trace the history of its development, he tells interesting anecdotes of unusual services that it has performed. He knows what type of metals go to its construction. He can supply facts, figures and data, but he weaves them into an attractive saga of presentation.

If the colour of the equipment is grey it is very orthodox to refer to the "pleasing colour". The prospect can see that it is grey. If you tell him the exact shade of grey, who supplies the paint and who in your Company decided that it should be painted grey and why that decision was reached, you can build a short story around a mundane fact.

A salesman has to tell the truth and his facts must be accurate. In delivering the facts, there is, however, a tremendous difference between a dry-as-dust presentation which verges on the boring, and a stimulating, absorbing and interesting story which makes a prospect decide that it is from you and your Company that he intends to make his purchase.

Sincerely,

STUART

THAT'S HOW THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

Dear Ralph,

Let's be fair about it. Were the men and women who staff Head Offices, and particularly the sales offices, as moronic and inefficient as some salesmen claim them to be, then the employing companies would long since have been out of business.

Did you hear that perpetual beefer, Bill, moaning away the other day? "What do you expect," he said, "with the lack of co-operation we get. I'll tell you why I lost the order. I'm wrong, I didn't lose it. *They* lost it. The special samples I asked *them* to send reached the client a day late. That's the way the cookie crumbles in this outfit." Of course, what Bill didn't say was that he 'phoned through his request at the last minute before the office closed, and that the details that he supplied were not clear. The secretary he spoke to had to check with the Sales Manager first thing in the morning in order to get his help in clarifying Bill's requirements.

Book after book is published outlining advice on how sales management should treat salesmen. Rightly extolled is the value of the man in the field. It is emphasised that everything possible must be done to keep salesmen happily selling. There can hardly be a salesman who is not prepared to detail the type of support he wants from his Head Office. And, no doubt, high up on the list would be "Personal Consideration" and a "Sympathetic Appreciation of My Problems".

You know, one doesn't very often read much about the treatment that Sales Office personnel, in their turn, should receive from salesmen.

It may relieve a man's inner tensions to take the mickey

out of some clerk or girl back at Head Office, but it doesn't achieve any good purpose in the long run. When people are sniped at and snorted at, when it is implied that they are not very important in the sales structure of things, then is it to be wondered at that sometimes they lose interest in their work?

Were salesmen to treat the back-room boys and girls, on whom they are very dependent, with the same tact, courtesy and consideration that they display when with clients and prospects, there would be much more harmony in sales organisations.

Reverting to Bill. Have you ever been out on the road with him? He gives a fair imitation of Prince Charming when with a prospect. Then out he comes and into a telephone booth with some immediate, urgent, do-it-now directive to someone in the office. He's turned into Lord Snappit of Snarl Hall. Or he writes a chitty that produces as much reaction as action.

It's not really surprising that some company salesmen appear to receive the maximum co-operation from Head Office staff whilst a minority always consider themselves to be badly let down. The reason is that they let themselves down every time they inflate their precious ego in the direction of Head Office.

It pays to be pleasant to a prospect and it pays, no less, to be pleasant to people in one's own Company. At least half these office types are starved of appreciation, and we know how salesmen feel when their worth is not recognised.

Consider Bill, for instance. He would be most offended if anyone suggested that he didn't work to the best of his ability. Yet he is very free with his criticisms about the capacity of other people.

"That's How The Cookie Crumbles" is a new and

fatalistic phrase. But when it always crumbles against the interests of a particular individual one is led to enquire who baked it in the first place?

Sincerely,
STUART

THE PROSPECT—A REMARKABLE MAN

Dear Douglas,

Mark Twain once wrote: "There are three kinds of people—commonplace men, remarkable men and lunatics."

When I once quoted these words to a salesman he said, "Maybe Mark Twain was right. I reckon all the people who are still 'considering' my proposition are commonplace, those who place an order right away are remarkable, and those who give me an immediate turndown are lunatics."

If we only had to visit and talk to people who quickly valued our point of view, and placed an order, selling would not require so much patience and care in presentation. With a good story and polite manners orders would be secured with gratifying rapidity.

Unfortunately, building turnover is not that simple. Irrespective of the value of a product and the obvious integrity of the salesman, people have to be won over. Their personal goodwill has to be gained. Even when this has been achieved an order does not always materialise. But if the salesman does not gain the liking of the prospect, then it will be difficult to secure an order even with

a product that the prospect wants, needs and can pay for. Not impossible, mind you, but difficult.

It has often been said that the most important words in selling are "You" and "Your". "What do you think, Mr. Smith?" "What you say is very interesting, Mr. Brown." "Your Company has a fine reputation, Mr. Clark."

So far, so good, but it doesn't go far enough. Let's go back to those words—"commonplace", "remarkable" and "lunatic".

I doubt if many of the prospects you call upon consider themselves as being lunatics, even though a few may, in your opinion, be nearly certifiable. What's more, it's highly probable that they do not think of themselves as being at all commonplace.

Practically every man you come across *regards himself* as being remarkable. Not a genius, or a saint, perhaps, but remarkable. What is more, he is right because each man is, to some degree or another, different from any other man.

The truth is that people like themselves and, although the stoical may hide the fact, they wish to be thought remarkable by their fellows.

If, therefore, you want to get a good hearing you have to go into each interview with the fixed intention of treating the man you meet as a remarkable man.

You have to treat him with respect, courtesy and a degree of admiration but, of course, not with open flattery.

In actual fact he may be dull, he may be slow and even boorish. He may be naïve or brash. His job may seem routine and uninteresting.

If you can make that man believe that you are sincerely interested in him as a person, if you can convey to him that you are genuinely keen on learning the intricacies

of his daily work, if you give him the impression that you think he is of consequence, then you are going to make that man happy. *You are going to brighten his day.*

Although a man may consider himself to be remarkable, he may also be dolefully conscious that other people most certainly show little sign of recognising his remarkability.

So when someone comes along and makes this prospect feel better, reinforces his faith in himself, recognises his importance, the prospect is going to be made a happy man. Happiness, like gloom, is contagious.

That prospect is going to reach a friendly conclusion about the salesman, always allowing for his showing tact and discretion.

He is going, in his turn, to look upon the salesman as someone remarkable. Just because he, the prospect, was treated as though he personally mattered in the world.

The salesman who inspires others, who improves the morale of those he talks to, will generally receive favourable attention.

Favourable attention does not mean an order. The product has to be sold and the benefits clearly established. Favourable attention, however, creates an atmosphere which is essential if the sales story is going to produce an order.

Sincerely,

STUART

DANGEROUS FRIENDS

Dear Alan,

"I tell you, Blaketon, that this Company has no vision, no vision at all. Now, when I was with the Z.R. people they really backed their men. I do what I can, but a fellow who is used to working at my contact level, Blaketon, really needs an effective expense account. I mean, old boy, you don't feed lions with lettuce, do you?"

This is how the successful failures in selling talk, Alan. *The type of men who can become dangerous friends to someone who has just taken up selling as a career.* Here you are, at the age of forty-one, having just left the Army and entering the civilian occupation of selling.

By far the greater majority of your colleagues on the road are decent hard-working men. Many of them are dedicated to their work. Nearly all of them have greater initiative, a further measure of optimism and a greater desire for independence than other civilians. They are men of integrity and energy. You will get on well with them.

Now and again, though, you will come up against some strange and quite fascinating types. They are the line-shooters, the "I am a big man" sort. You meet their ilk in the Services, and in every walk of life.

A lot of people, outside selling, think that all a salesman has to be able to do in order to succeed is to spin out words like gossamer thread. *Of course, being a good talker is a real help but, without judgment, reliability and a sense of service, the words are just camouflage.*

* * *

The line-shooters in selling, and there is generally one in each sales force, have an astonishing facility for using

words to explain why they didn't get the order and why no one else could have got it. They are masters of self-justification. They stay in each job just as long as they can cover their tracks.

You being an ex-major, they will make a bee-line for you, anticipating a fresh audience, "man to man, old boy". They will be most anxious that you should acquire sales background from them, that you should get their viewpoint.

After you've had some experience on the road you will soon be able to spot these line-shooters and take them with many pinches of salt. Initially, though, you could hardly be blamed for being impressed. Too early a friendship with them could be very damaging because their views and outlook could give you a false perspective on salesmen and selling.

The kind of things they say are:

"I don't waste my time on the small fry, Blaketon. The big men are my meat."

"Three hours at the pictures in the afternoon! My dear old fellow, a man of my calibre and concentration needs a little bit of relaxation. Besides, I get inspiration. Thinkin' up sales plans."

"Would you believe it, Blaketon? That niggling Sales Manager—and I doubt if he could manage a picnic without disaster—asked how I could justify trunk telephone calls to the tune of £41 5s. 0d. last month. I know an order hasn't materialised yet, but we've got to think big in these matters, think big. I might have pulled off a deal for a cool thousand. Now when I ran my own concern I can tell you I didn't chivvy the men I relied on."

"Trouble with this firm, Blaketon, is that they judge a man on his turnover and not his potential. Given time I could open accounts of a size which would wilt our

Managing Director. By the way, did I tell you how I secured a very large order—about seven years ago—by importing a puma into the country for a client of mine who had his own private zoo?"

* * *

"Do you know old Richardson, Blaketon? President of our Trade Association. Play golf with him regularly. Or rather, I used to. I'll introduce you to him. Capital chap, Richardson. Probably a millionaire. Valuable contact."

"Hope you'll like it here, Blaketon. Decent fellows on the team. Plodders, mind you. Bit dull. Not real salesmen. Just hopeful plodders. Difficult for me to fit in—different standards you know. It's quite laughable, but it's true, some of them actually read books on selling. Kid stuff. As a matter of fact, I doubt if Sergeant Ernie Bilko, James Bond or a rocket could put zip into our lot. Still, decent chaps—they mean well."

"As soon as I'm off this lousy territory and get a bit of co-operation, I'll show the field a clean pair of heels."

"Reports. A complete waste of time, old boy. Nobody ever reads them. The girls cut them up and save the pieces for confetti."

"I think I know you well enough, Blaketon, to tell you I've got quite a good idea for the two of us to open up on our account. With my experience and trade knowledge and—er—your capital, we could scoop the cream."

Well, that's how it goes. You will come across very, very few men like this. But there are some. If and when you do meet them, keep them at a polite distance for they can be dangerous friends.

Sincerely,

STUART

THE MAN WHO LOST HIS TERRITORY

Dear Brian,

Some years ago the Suez crisis blew up. British bombers were in action and our parachutists dropped into Port Said. As you made your sales calls you were a very perturbed young man and who can blame you? You saw a finger on the hand of contemporary history beginning to point in your direction, you listened to mental echoes which seemed to be saying, "Hey, Brian, they may soon need you."

You wondered if you would receive a buff-coloured O.H.M.S. envelope. You worried about what would then happen to your wife, your home, your job—your territory.

In this letter I'm going to tell you what Suez did for one salesman. His life's work was broken as easily as a strip of three-ply wood. As you will quickly realise, it would be unfair to mention his name and no possible good would result from doing so. I will call him Dick. He is a British citizen who, until Suez, lived in Cairo. He spent his boyhood there and at sixteen joined the staff of a fairly small manufacturers' agent. His commencing salary was £2 10s. 0d. per week. He had not been working very long when the 1939 War began and as soon as he could, he joined the Navy.

After demobilisation he went back to his Company, on the sales side. He worked and worked and worked. The Company grew slowly and obtained good overseas agencies. Dick personally envisaged and pioneered a new Division and, with his employers' backing, built it up from scratch. He became head of this Division with his own sales force and he was sent on overseas trips to

see the principals whom his firm represented in Egypt. He was made a Director of his Company. In 1955 he earned just over £4,000, and his future looked brighter still. He already had a solid stake in Egypt. A house, a car, a directorship, money in the bank.

At the time the Canal was nationalised, Dick sensed the coming tide of events in the Middle East. He and his family got out while the going was still good. He bought return air tickets and was allowed to take out of the country £75 0s. 0d. per head. He arrived in England. After some weeks the situation appeared to be easing, and he booked air reservations for the return.

The day before he was due to leave, the Israelis attacked Gaza and, of course, he could not return. He is still in England and counts himself extremely fortunate.

To-day he has a sales job as a member of the field force of one of the large firms he previously represented. He does not now earn anything like £4,000 a year. He has lost his home, his furniture, his car, his savings—all his material possessions.

He is now building and creating all over again for himself and his family.

I first made his acquaintance during the War. I saw him again when I was selling in Cairo. When I met him in England recently I would not have been at all surprised to find a broken man.

Instead, I encountered a cheerful, courageous and tranquil young business man. It may seem difficult to believe but his conversation was almost entirely of the future and what it could mean for him. He was unembittered. He was at peace with himself. His spirit was infectious.

You and I had our worries over Suez. He had his reality, and it did not destroy his basic outlook on life.

But for the fact that he left friends and colleagues of many nationalities in Cairo, I would salute him, *in his real name*, in print. He has proved resolute and cheerful, courageous and optimistic. He deserves to succeed.

Sincerely,

STUART

MAKE THE BUYER'S JOB EASIER

Dear Neil,

This is a very quiz-conscious age in which we live. TV, radio and the newspapers are loaded with panel guessing games, "Any Questions" programmes and questionnaires for the individual to test his own knowledge.

You may be interested to learn that the Research Institute of America, Inc., N.Y., evolved a series of self-analysis quizzes applicable to salesmen.

This questionnaire covered a considerable number of pages in an issue of that excellent American journal *Sales Management.*

"How much help do *you*, for instance, give to a buyer when you are with him? This quotation, which should help you arrive at an answer, is from *Sales Management.*

"The following series of tests is designed to enable you to judge just how well you understand the buyer's hidden needs.

1. Do you make the job of deciding easy by stressing all the advantages your product offers?
2. Do you give the buyer reassurance after the sale is closed?
3. Do you provide him with material that will help him sell his decision up the line, or to associates if that is necessary?
4. Do you handle all the annoying minor details, so that the decision to buy means the end of his worries?
5. Do you personalise your sales story so that the prospect knows you're interested in solving his problems?
6. Do you use proof material to assure the buyer that the decision to buy is a good one?

"You can score yourself on this issue—and start redesigning yourself to-day to improve that and keep your customers solidly in your camp."

Well, I don't know about "redesigning yourself", but certainly a careful analysis of your answers to these questions should polish up your approach to one of the dominating factors of selling—the ability to turn a buyer's need into a buyer's want. If he wants your product strongly enough then you will obtain the order.

Sincerely,

STUART

SO YOU THINK THE GOING'S TOUGH!

Dear Frank,

Taking it easy one Saturday morning I was in my dressing gown, splashing amateurishly about with a paint brush. My thoughts were about as far as they could be, not very far, from selling.

The door bell rang. Being close I went to open it and was confronted by a very small gentleman, in a grey suit. He told me that he had been advised to call on us by a friend of ours. He handed me a battered notebook with the name and address of this friend. Resting by his side was a heavy-looking suitcase, for our visitor was what used to be known as a "bag-man".

We invited him in and learned that his name was Chris Karkides and that he came to this country from Cyprus five years ago. Since then he has been selling hard in every kind of weather. When he started his circuits in Britain he had never sold anything on the road previously.

He sells Cyprus Art Needlework of all types. Soon he was showing us his goods and I noted that the most expensive items were all at the top of his case, which was good selling.

As I was quite fascinated by his way of life, for it was selling at its most basic, I kept him rather a long time by asking him question after question.

His first year in Britain had been very difficult for he had no connections. By this he meant no contacted prospects whom he could call back upon. His system was to record in a series of notebooks the names and addresses of everyone he sold anything to and then call back in

nine months or a year. He said his subsequent orders were always larger than his first. His circuit wanderings took him to the main residential areas in towns all over England and Scotland.

His main method of prospecting, which seemed to be highly successful, was to obtain names and addresses of friends of people from whom he had obtained orders. He stated that he never requested these from anyone from whom he did not get an order. Anyway, as far as we could see he had accumulated many notebooks crammed with names.

The goods he sells are made by his family in Lefkara, Cyprus. I asked him what happened when he was ill and he said, "No one want to talk to sickening man so I stay home and lose money." I can only suppose Chris Karkides, who must be about forty years of age and has a happy twinkle in his eye and a touching smile, makes a good living from his ten to twenty calls a day. Every day must be a strange adventure for him as he plods about with his heavy case selling in what, to him, is a foreign and difficult language.

Sometimes I hear our modern salesmen, with their fine Company cars and lavish expense accounts, saying that the "going's tough". Selling the Karkides way would teach them a thing or two.

Sincerely,

STUART

PLAN AND PREPARE

Dear Peter,

To achieve any degree of success and fulfilment in one's work it is necessary to have an objective and a plan of operation. A man should know what he wants to do with his life and prepare to make and to take his opportunities. To attain one's final ambition it is generally best to concentrate on the limited objective just ahead, capture and consolidate it, and work forward from there.

There is tremendous inner satisfaction from setting a target for oneself and achieving it.

Some people, of course, set themselves a fantastically difficult target, with too narrow a time limit for success, and not based on the realities of their latent capabilities. They fail to reach it and they should never have set it for themselves in the first place. They become discouraged and despondent and their will-power for future effort becomes weakened. The ability to achieve on a large scale develops and grows from progressive accomplishments.

Great talents seem to be given to certain people but they can only be brought to their peak by constant practice and use. Men like C. S. Forester, Yehudi Menuhin and Peter May are constantly practising in private, as well as performing in public. C. S. Forester re-writes, Yehudi Menuhin rehearses, and Peter May still has net practice.

It is just as necessary for the less gifted to practise, to plan and to prepare.

Successful selling requires constant thought, practice, preparation and application.

A salesman should have some personal objective. He

should ask himself what he hopes to achieve from his work in pleasure, in profit and in position.

It is very praiseworthy for a keen young man to say, and believe, that he wants to be the Managing Director of a Public Company by the time he is forty-five. However, he has a long way to go before he reaches that position. Unless he attains and passes the many intermediate stages successfully, he will not fulfil his ambition.

What he should do is to work very hard in the present in order to make sure of achieving his next planned objective.

Amongst salesmen there are two main groups who are happy in their work. Those who intend to "get on", knowing the sacrifices that will be required of them—and those who are not particularly ambitious and who are content to be reasonably well paid for a reasonably well-accomplished job.

There are also quite a number of people who are unsettled in their work. They feel unfulfilled, restless and dissatisfied. This is generally because their attitude to their work is wrong or because they are doing the wrong work. A salesman who does not like selling cannot possibly be happy trying to earn his living in this way.

The question is, can he be happy in any other type of work? *If he does not know what he wants to do or where to do it, then, undoubtedly, he is very likely to be discontented whatever he does.* The only exception will be if he finds himself, by accident, in some work for which he forms an affection.

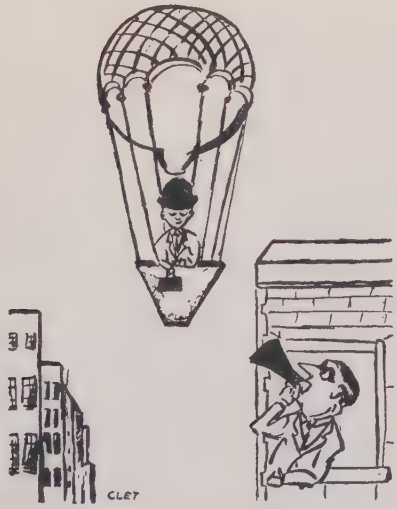
I know a man, a capable salesman in his rare bursts of endeavour, who has drifted from one position to another. He has achieved nothing worth while and, not unnaturally, he erupts every now and then with dissatisfaction. A mutual acquaintance said of him: *"The trouble*

with Alec is simply this. He doesn't know what he wants and doesn't want what he knows."

If one wishes to avoid being part of the flotsam and jetsam of life, if one wishes to enjoy some sense of worthwhile achievement, one has to set a course and keep to it. One has to fix an objective and work and plan towards its fulfilment.

You must have a strong idea of what you can do for selling as well as a realisation of what selling can do for you.

Sincerely,
STUART



"Return at once, Bracegirdle. That is not what I meant when I said 'The sky's the limit'."

A CLIMATE OF OPINION

Dear Joe,

While I do not believe that Americans are better salesmen than Britons I envy the men in the States one distinct advantage they appear to have in their work.

There seems to exist in the U.S.A. a climate of public opinion which is favourable to selling and salesmen. By the majority of the populace selling is considered an exciting and exceedingly worth-while pursuit.

To cap a Russian description of successful effort, top salesmen in America are the successful self-motivated Stakhanovites of capitalism.

Time and time again one reads glossy American magazines, intended for the general public, and finds that some outstanding salesman has been interviewed, his career outlined and his views quoted. People seem to enjoy reading these commercial success stories.

The British public is slowly becoming aware of the tremendous importance of salesmen, and their value in the economy of the country, but we have a long way to go before the salesman receives full recognition from "laymen".

A friend of mine, who had been a rep. out on the road for many years, was appointed an Area Manager. When he announced his new position to his family his well-educated sixteen-year-old son came forth with this congratulatory statement: "I say, Dad, does this mean you haven't got to walk about the streets any more?"

This sums up the attitude of a number of people, from sixteen to seventy-six, to the work and the standing of a salesman. "Walking about the streets", indeed! Salesmen on the road are the men who secure and ensure

production. On the success and the understanding of their work, the prosperity and future of the nation depends. The nation should be educated to this reality.

Sincerely,

STUART

LIKING THE JOB

Dear Phil,

Such is the tempo of events that it's not difficult to lose our sense of perspective. Only the other day I came across a passage in a book which listed, from A to Z, no less than fifty qualities regarded as essential to "large business success".

This verbal monument to the subject began with "Accuracy, Adaptability, Alertness, Ambition" and ended with "Truthfulness, Vigilance, Vigour and Zeal".

Like me, you may have little doubt that the qualities listed are necessary and that unless we have them our chances for achieving "large business success" are somewhat limited.

I haven't listed all fifty for you and so you'll have to take my word for it that there are a number of desirable things which were not mentioned. Two of them are obtaining enjoyment from one's work, and the possession of a sense of humour.

To be perfectly frank I don't suppose a sense of humour is necessary for achieving success in business. Nevertheless, it's a pleasant companion to have on any journey.

I just don't see, though, how any salesman can be

happy in his work unless he enjoys doing the work in question. And there are very few people who reach material success unless they are happy in their work. Surely no man can claim that he is a success, irrespective of his income, unless his work—taken in its entirety—gives him contentment.

A man who doesn't like his job, and it may be no real fault of his, is a failure to himself.

Happiness, a sense of enjoyment, may not be a virtue or a quality in the accepted sense of the word. It's a state of mind. The man who is happy in his work has fortune in abundance.

We have to work for a living and, in doing so, the men who like their work generally make the best living in their respective fields.

If you think of the successful salesmen you know, ask yourself if they gave you the impression of liking their work. Do you think they enjoy it? I expect you'll discover that the answer is "Yes".

There are a large number of very capable men who are misfits because they do not enjoy their work. And there are quite a number of men of fairly average ability who do remarkably well because their enthusiasm for their job supplies them with impetus.

Of course, in selling, one has to have "patience, persistence, precision, promptness", etc., but *it's at least equally important to like selling as a method of earning one's living.*

As for that intangible quality—a sense of humour. Well, it never made anyone materially rich in the sales field but unless we can get some fun and laughter from our work, life becomes a very sombre affair.

One of the greatest blessings a man can have is to enjoy his work. To a large degree it makes the difference

between living and existing. Those who stretch out for "success" often find it eludes them. Success is apt to come to those who enjoy their work because they are happy in that work. Generally, the more they like their work, the greater their success for they take a pride in accomplishment.

If you want to be a good salesman you must enjoy selling.

Sincerely,
STUART

A REASONABLE MAN

Dear Alfred,

"I'll tell you the type of salesman I most admire," said the Buyer of a large engineering company. "He's what I could best describe as being a thoroughly reasonable man who treats me as though he knew I was a reasonable person, not an ogre or, on the other hand, someone with money to fling around.

"High-pressure selling I detest. I go on my guard straight away. But I like a man who radiates enthusiasm, although some men boom enthusiasm, and that's a bit trying. I see no reason why a man should not sell 'energetically', but then that's different from high-pressure. On the other hand, I don't find myself in sympathy with the obsequious type. The salesman and I both have a job to do, and a display of too much deference embarrasses me.

"Naturally, I expect the men I meet to be well turned out and have a good idea of how my Company will

benefit from any transaction that is suggested. I want to learn something from them, even if I don't buy. Otherwise my time is wasted.

"When I come to define what I mean by 'reasonable', I find it's not so easy. I suppose it boils down to a man who talks common sense, who is informed as to my needs, who makes no exaggerated claims and yet holds to his sales points with a firmness I respect.

"He's the kind of fellow whose opinions and attitudes are mature and who abhors line-shooting as much as he does self-depreciation. Whilst he is with me I have the feeling that the interview is so worth while that it's an enjoyable experience. The type I call reasonable men are my best friends in business."

Are you a reasonable man?

Sincerely,
STUART

GUESSING'S NO GOOD

Dear Gordon,

Lack of money made a friend of mine give up guessing as a method of promoting sales. He sells a service to industry and any manufacturing organisation is a prospect for him. Much of his calling is cold turkey.

He told me that when he began work with his present Company he assessed prospects by appearance. He went by the size and "atmosphere" of the factory. He said, "I'd find myself in an industrial area, and when I saw some

small, untidy-looking outfit I concluded that they would be useless to me and so I'd pass them by. Time after time I would look out of the car and my intuition would lead me to guess that these people were no good as prospects. Ropey—that's what they looked. Our lowest-priced installation is over £100. I thought that these people wouldn't, or couldn't, buy from us.

"So I concentrated on the larger firms. I made some sales, but not enough. After a time I'd pretty well covered the big and medium-sized factories in my area. I wasn't getting nearly enough orders to build up a sizeable commission cheque. So, reluctantly at first, I began calling on these small people whom I hadn't deigned to consider previously. Believe me, I got some surprises. For one thing, I soon realised that they vastly outnumbered the bigger-sized businesses.

"I can't understand now why I thought they were all in the hands of doddering incompetents. Many of them were being run by keen young chaps who were building up a business. Others were owned and operated by men of mature years who were earning more money for themselves than if they had been employee executives in a large company. Naturally, a number of the small firms were unprogressive and behind the times, but that didn't mean they couldn't be sold to. They were uneducated industrially and one of the reasons for this is that scores of salesmen, like me, were passing them by.

"*Economic circumstances forced me to give up guessing about prospects.* If a firm could use my equipment I called upon that firm. I stopped picking and choosing and my turnover figures started climbing. There were a lot of orders from people who I had previously written off."

It seems to me, Gordon, that you are far too choosey

about your own calls. I agree that it is advantageous to be selective in selling. When you have a host of absolutely tip-top prospects you can afford to be selective. *You must give priority to the best prospects.* Very few salesmen, though, are overloaded with outstandingly good prospects. Most people, who have a large prospect field, have prospects that might be good, indifferent or bad. It is unwise to categorise them too specifically until you have called upon them personally.

You are not doing well enough to be able to dismiss a prospect from your sales activities because your "guess" is that the firm is not capable of buying your equipment. That's not for you to judge. The prospect will decide after you've told him your story. Naturally, if you don't tell it there will be no order.

One of the reasons that successful salesmen have become successful is because experience has taught them that they cannot rely on guesses, hunches and unsubstantiated conclusions.

Salesmen who "guess" that certain prospects will not buy, and therefore do not make a call upon those prospects, are responsible for a tremendous number of lost orders.

Guessing's no good as a method of sales prospecting.

Sincerely,

STUART

DOING BUSINESS WITH FRIENDS

Dear Noel,

One of the difficult decisions that a salesman sometimes has to face is whether he should attempt to sell to his personal friends.

It is obvious that such a problem rarely confronts the man selling cranes, timber or factory flooring. It could occur more frequently to such people as motor-car and refrigerator salesmen.

When one enters a field of selling that necessitates the constant contacting of householders then it is a question which is ever present. Specific instances are insurance salesmen and men who sell encyclopædias and reference books.

There are two quite different outlooks concerning this matter. One school of thought believes that it is perfectly in order to solicit one's friends for business. That providing one is selling something of value, then both one's friends and oneself gain from the transaction. It is also beneficial because personal friends can be induced to give introductions to other people.

The temptation to sell to personal friends must be very strong indeed and particularly so for the fresh entry into selling.

Another school of thought holds that a man should rigorously avoid initiating any attempt to sell to social friends.

You ask me for my views on this subject. Rightly or wrongly, I subscribe, with minor reservations, to the second school of thought. I believe it impolitic to approach personal friends in my social life for the intention of obtaining them as clients. It is easy to say this,

though, because my own selling has never been to householders.

Anyway, I do not think one can draw too hard and fast a rule. While I feel it is incorrect to approach a personal friend, the situation is quite different if it is the friend who makes the first approach. If a friend takes the initiative then the salesman can certainly react with energy. There is no reason therefore why you should let your friends be ignorant of your Company and your work.

The situation is also completely different with business friends who, later, become personal friends. You are bound to meet people in business with whom you become very friendly. In certain cases you will find yourself visiting their homes socially. The prospect or client becomes a close social acquaintance or friend.

The contact, however, was made in the first place through a business meeting. This leaves you free, at appropriate times, to broach business matters.

In the end, this question of using social connections for business is one that has to be decided by each individual. I would suggest, however, that it may be preferable to make a friend of a client rather than a client of a friend.

Sincerely,

STUART

A MAN OF CONFIDENCE

Dear Colin,

Jim would have been flattered if he had overheard the complimentary remark you made about him the other evening. Just to refresh your memory, you said, "What I admire about Jim is that he's always so confident. Had I his confidence, perhaps my sales figures would be comparable to his."

Without wishing to diminish, in any way, Jim's reputation, I think your praise was incorrectly placed. I have known Jim a long time, and I am sure that he is not *always* confident. There are days when he feels off colour, times when he is not certain of the successful outcome of an enterprise and occasions when he gets depressed. After all, the man is human. He doesn't go through life, all the time, on a perpetual high peak of self-assurance. Who does?

The attribute you admire so much in Jim is not so much his confidence, but his appearance of confidence. Years of self-discipline have enabled him to create an impression of confidence. Being an astute student of human nature, he realises that appearances count for a great deal. Many years ago he learned that people are rather inclined, at first meeting, to take a man at his own valuation. The man who behaves as though he were hesitant, nervous or depressed is accepted as being of a negative disposition. *The man who carries himself with confidence and who talks with assurance is accepted as having a positive personality.*

Most days of the week, most hours of the day, Jim is genuinely confident. So he should be. He knows how to sell, he is an expert on his product's performance and he

has great faith in the product. Behind him is a pattern of high-quality selling. Without doubt he has much more real confidence than many of his colleagues.

I once asked him if he ever felt depressed or lethargic. Whether he ever considered that an interview was going to be difficult or possibly unpleasant. He said: "Quite often. Probably more often than you think. But it's no good making your career in the Merchant Navy if you're always going to be a fair-weather sailor. And it's not much use contemplating life as a salesman if you are not prepared to deal with your own lassitude.

"*When I feel down, then I go out of my way not to let the prospect see it.* It's said that a salesman should be something of an actor. On the occasions I don't feel confident I make every effort to act confidently. When I've had an unexpected turn-down I go into the next prospect's office as though I was booking a rush of orders. You know, there are days when a man feels he can hardly look at himself, let alone anyone else. On such a day I *make* myself look the prospect in the eye as though all was very well in my world.

"*I'm sure the way to have genuine self-confidence most of the time is to act with self-confidence all the time.* Each prospect sees me as I appear to him at the time of the interview. I never forget this and never allow myself to give any other impression than that I am pleased to be in front of a source of business and justifiably proud to represent my firm and its product."

Jim, you see, works on a sound assumption. *The man who looks confident is accepted as being confident.*

It isn't at all difficult to behave with assurance when things are running smoothly. It takes a man of determination and courage to hold his head high on those occasions when his spirit may be low.

One of Jim's most admirable qualities is his consistent determination to master circumstances and not let circumstances master him.

Sincerely,
STUART

ACTION BRINGS RESULTS

Dear George,

Don't be influenced by people minimising the importance of research in selling. Time spent in finding special reasons why a prospect should buy from you and time employed in general reconnaissance is of great value. The knowledge gained in this way is what so often assists a salesman in landing a big order.

Researching, however, should never be a substitute for making calls or used as a valid reason for not making calls. *The aim of research in selling is to make more effective calls and to make calls more effective.* There is no room for the back-room boy type as an active salesman on the road.

Person-to-person selling requires the skilful use of many personal attributes. Nevertheless, all the charm in the world, a fine appreciation of the prospect's problems and an understanding of the true importance of selling will not get you very far unless you use a very basic and important quality—Initiative.

It does not matter how clever you are, how intelligent or how well turned out if you lack the ability to activate yourself. *To succeed in selling, constant activity is demanded from you.* It is you who have to initiate the

moves—the prospect seldom will do so. All the time you have to keep moving, mentally and physically. You *must* start things and you *must* complete them if it is your aim to secure orders. If you have the know-how of selling but not the necessary energy, or initiative, your commission cheque will always be low and you will inevitably tend to consider salesmanship more difficult than it really is.

If you personally contact as many prospects as possible, and if you continue to contact them, your chances of success are positive. If you wait for prospects to contact you then you will wait and wait and wait, and then feel, with self-pity, that business is very slow.

One of the most interesting, almost inspiring, things about selling is that so often a man controls the pattern of his own destiny and, ultimately, income. That pattern is related to the tempo of his activity as well as his selling ability.

Initiative is not a priceless ingredient. It has a very definite market value. When business appears slack, when orders are slow in developing, then more than ever must you initiate ideas and plans.

It's up to you to go out and get the order. It is not for the prospect personally to seek you out, ask you if you would like an order and then hand it over, wrapped in cotton wool—bearing a label, "To George, in appreciation for taking no trouble to visit us, or even think about us. Many thanks."

Sincerely,

STUART

"SITTING IT OUT"

Dear Leslie,

You aren't the first newcomer to the sales force of your Company to ask how A.R. became the Sales Director. After all, he doesn't actually look like the young man's popular idea of a dynamic, inspired, hell-for-leather, flat-out personality. He doesn't look like it, talk like it or act like it. What's more, neither he nor anyone else would ever claim he was *brilliant* when he was out on the road himself. Only once in many years on the road with the Company did he head the sales force in turnover, and he says that was because conditions were in his favour. He was, however, always a good salesman and he's a very good Sales Director.

No, he doesn't look like a tigerish executive in "The Man In The Grey Flannel Suit", "The Hucksters" or any of those big-business films. He has a large pipe, always going out. He dresses very soberly, wears horn-rim spectacles and is getting rather stout. He speaks slowly and quietly. He never seems particularly hustled. As someone said about him, "He looks like a benign, kindly, sure-clawed owl." He does.

Of course, you realise he can't possibly hold down his job as Sales Director of a large Public Company unless he's a top-notch man.

He is absolutely reliable on the management side. *He knows salesmen and selling.* He is intimately acquainted with the Company's products and policies. He has a questing mind. He is understanding and fair. He has good judgment. *The field force are very aware that he is for them and backing them—all the time.*

He's really a modest chap. One day I asked him to

what he attributed his success and I obtained rather a surprising answer. He said: "I seem to have been born with the ability to 'sit it out'." That may seem an odd remark from a salesman who had to keep mobile.

"It's like this," he answered. "I joined this Company when I was quite young, and I'm no different from anyone else when it comes to personal feelings. There were quite a number of times when I got ruffled, even angry, when I temporarily thought I was underpaid, when I imagined I was getting the wrong end of the stick. Every time I thought I'd make a change a voice inside said 'sit it out', the conditions will probably alter. Sooner or later they did. Either that or I simmered down and my attitude changed. Of course, if there hadn't been any change either in the condition or my attitude, I would have had to leave.

"Personal differences do occur in business. I remember coming to Head Office as Assistant Sales Manager. For reasons best known to himself, the elderly Managing Director didn't think my face fitted. He retired fifteen months after I joined Head Office, but those fifteen months were uncomfortable and I *nearly* packed it in. Fortunately, I had a good Sales Director and Sales Manager, both of whom 'protected' me. If I'd left at that time I wouldn't be Sales Director to-day.

"I like to think I don't kid myself. During my years with the Company there have been better salesmen than I and men, in the sales force, of higher administrative ability. The only thing is, they didn't stay. Some of them, I think, were right to look further afield, but many could have 'sat out' their temporary dissatisfactions. They didn't like their territory, or they thought the rewards weren't high enough. They didn't have the patience to put up with temporary inconvenience, so they upped

sticks and went elsewhere. If they'd 'sat it out' I've got little doubt that one of them would have been Sales Director of this Company.

"Don't let me give you a wrong impression. Some of the men who left did very well indeed for themselves. The majority, however, were no better off in the long run. After all, this is a very large concern, with many executive sales positions, and Branch and Area Managerships."

Of course ambitious men must try to forge ahead. Of course no one expects, nor is it desirable, that a man should stay in the same job for ever. The tragedy is that so many salesmen pack up too soon. They seek for change when, had they 'sat it out' a little longer, no change would have been necessary. *A selling career demands drive and energy but it also needs patience and long-term planning.*

Sincerely,

STUART

ON INFLUENCING A SALE

Dear Max,

If you have met Australians you will appreciate just how keen and efficient they are in commercial life.

One of the very best business magazines in the world is the Australian monthly, *Rydge's*. Its editorial pages are divided into three main sections—management, marketing and selling, and finance.

It is a pity that salesmen in the United Kingdom do not read more business journals from the Dominions and the U.S.A. By not doing so they miss a great deal of helpful information.

Some time ago there appeared, in *Rydge's*, advice which, if followed, could be worth many pounds to a salesman practising it thoughtfully and thoroughly. There was nothing new in the advice the magazine tabulated. It was simply that they published so much relevant counsel, and in such a clear-cut fashion, that it is well worth bringing it to your attention.

Altogether *Rydge's* listed "17 Points which Influence a Sale". This is what *Rydge's* said:

"Smile.

Remember that a man's name is to him the sweetest and most important sound in the English language.

Begin in a friendly way.

Get the other person saying 'yes, yes' as soon as possible.

Show respect for the other man's opinions. Never tell a man he is wrong.

Talk in terms of the other man's interests.

Let the other man do a great deal of the talking.

Try honestly to see things from the other man's point of view.

Be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires.

Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.

Dramatise your ideas.

Let the other man feel the idea is his.

If you are wrong admit it quickly and emphatically.

The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it.

Become genuinely interested in other people.

Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely.

Do not drift from your sales subject (momentarily yes, as it sometimes helps—but don't lose your subject)."

I think you'll agree that this is good advice.

Sincerely,
STUART

THE OTHER MAN'S EGO

Dear Wilfred,

You were telling me about Jack and how he's becoming a pain in the neck to the rest of you. "Continually chucking his weight around," you said—and then added, "The pity of it is he's just a light-weight anyway." "Got an inflated idea of his own importance," you commented. "The way he talks you'd think he really was a big shot. He's not all that good. He's not even half-way up in the list. We're all getting just a bit fed up with his displays of blatant egotism."

Candidly, I doubt if Jack's ego is really more inflated than most other people's. *The irritating and very obvious thing about Jack is that he doesn't take any trouble at all to hide his self-appreciation.* Quite reasonably it's this lack of concern that annoys you all. He simply won't indulge in the courtesy of appearing to be modest.

The rest of you could all go line-shooting too but you realise that it would be unwise and unseemly to do so.

People like Jack hooh-hah and bay to such an extent that, sooner or later, they walk right into the trouble that they have manufactured for themselves. After making all due allowances, reasonably restrained individuals begin to get sick and tired of what we Scots call "blow-porridges"—loud-mouthed, squawling types who not only praise themselves but try to boost everyone else's opinion of them.

To listen to loads of open conceit is bad enough. It is only tolerable from those who really have something to be conceited about and, generally, they are the folk who do not appear to be conceited.

In selling, it's figures that count. If a man's figures are

right, he doesn't need to say very much about them. If his figures are wrong, then (if he's that type) he trumpets his brilliance to any unfortunate within hearing.

Boosting a man's self-importance is a tremendously important part of selling. Indeed, a successful salesman must boost self-importance and he reaps a big reward. *It is, however, the self-importance of his prospects that he should boost, not his own.*

If he does this, if he is really considerate of the egos of those people with whom he tries to do business, many paths will be smoothed for him.

People are rather apt to like themselves and they are delighted when others appear to think highly of them too. What is more, they reciprocate. The man who treats others as he would like to be treated himself finds that people do tend to treat him well.

A salesman should polish the ego of clients and prospects. He should be sensible and reasonable about this. Fawning and gross flattery are useless. Good manners, thought and personal consideration are all that are required.

This does not mean that he has to lose his own dignity or that he has to cast aside his strong determination to secure an order. He is not a valet but an adviser, he isn't a stooge but a business man. He must use politeness and courtesy as sales weapons, not as excuses for failing to secure an order.

He should think before he speaks. I wish Jack would.

Sincerely,

STUART

PERSONAL PRESENTATION

Dear Cecil,

First impressions are important in selling. Packaging counts. Of course, if the product doesn't live up to the impression created by its presentation then the prospect is disillusioned and an actual purchaser is likely to be an embittered man.

The product is far more important than its package. In *Selling* it has been stressed, time and time again, that reliability, integrity, product knowledge, a sense of service, an understanding of techniques and hard work are far greater assets than a belief in the personality cult. *Personality salesmen are, in most cases, outsold by product salesmen.*

Nevertheless, it is a great mistake to underestimate or neglect the power of personality and the impact invariably made by neat, attractive appearance. First impressions are of significance. They create the initial impact, they tend to form an immediate climate of opinion.

It can, I think, be fairly stated that, collectively speaking, salesmen form the best-dressed section of the community. This, too, is as it should be, for very obvious reasons.

It is quite unnecessary to dress with ambassadorial elegance. Many prospects are embarrassed and put out if they have to deal with "tailors' dummies". On the other hand, they are even more disconcerted if they interview a salesman who is obviously down at heel and shabby. There are thousands of examples as to how salesmen should dress, because there are thousands of salesmen who dress appropriately for their work.

Everyone's financial outgoings are affected by their financial resources. There are, however, salesmen who say, "I can't afford new clothes. I'd like to be better dressed but I simply can't afford it." *The fact of the matter is that salesmen can't afford to be badly dressed.* There are, I know, a few examples of men who appear to ignore this and still maintain a big turnover, but they are rare and genuine exceptions and their example should not be followed.

In particular, I've been wondering if you might not have a word with Bert. You'd be doing him a favour.

He's a really decent fellow. Hard-working, loyal to the Company, well liked by the management and his colleagues. A good salesman, but by no means outstanding. I doubt if Bert ever will reach the top of the tree but I'm sure he could climb a bit higher. He must be missing some sales by the poor first impression his appearance creates.

Everyone knows these little things about him. The hair on the back of his neck always needs clipping. His shoes are never really clean. His suit invariably looks as though it needs pressing. He carries a dilapidated and constantly unfurled umbrella. His dispatch case appears to be on a journey to a jumble sale. A fountain pen and pencil, which should be carried in an inside or waistcoat pocket, are invariably stuck into his top outside pocket and look like a couple of miniature guided missiles awaiting launching.

The fact is—Bert's a bit sloppy. We all know it. People who realise his true worth nevertheless agree that he looks tatty.

Bert, however, is calling on some prospects who have never seen him before. If they form a first impression that he is sloppy and untidy it doesn't help him in his

selling. He starts off with a handicap. One imposed by himself.

Possibly it's unfortunate but people tend, initially, to take a man at his own valuation. So tell Bert to pull his socks up, literally.

Sincerely,
STUART

"Good morning, Mr. Chideburn, this really is a Cold Turkey Call."

DO YOU ASK YOURSELF WHY?

Dear Mark,

Something is holding you back. It may be timidity, possibly it is lack of faith in your product, or maybe it is lack of energy. Perhaps it is because you cannot picture what selling could do for you. You've now been on the road for quite a while and in your own words you've "not made a go of it".

You just make a living. Some people, because it's all a matter of comparison, might say you earned quite a good income, but it must be admitted that many of your contemporaries are fairly well off compared with you.

Now there's nothing the matter with your product in relation to its price. I know it and you know it. And your Company is a good one.

As far as I can judge your situation you are held back by two mental brakes. *You are the victim of your own negative attitude of mind.*

One factor braking your development is the timidity which I referred to earlier. You hate cold turkey calling because of an over-sensitivity you've never really tried to curb. You anticipate a rebuff and you sense brush-offs where none are really intended. Secondly, you apparently do not believe that selling can bring you, personally, any real degree of affluence. Other men yes, but not you.

Now in this damaging state of mind it doesn't make a great deal of difference whether you do believe in your product. You are absolutely shackled to the idea that even though your product is good, other men, your prospects, will have good reasons for not buying it.

It isn't faith in your product that you lack. It is absence of faith in your own abilities. So often the difference

between a good salesman and an unproductive one is not a matter of product knowledge or training at all. It is a difference of attitudes. One man tells himself he can go out and sell and he does just that. Another man tells himself that he cannot sell and he does not do so. One man has enthusiasm and stokes it up. Another man lets any enthusiasm he had be eroded away.

So often, in speciality selling, the following can be the situation. A salesman is outside an office block. Inside are various types of companies, managed by different kinds of human beings. Not one man in that block has ever heard of the salesman because he has never called there previously. Many of these men may not even have heard of his Company.

For varying spans of time they have conducted their affairs in total ignorance of that salesman's existence. Logic tells him that those prospects could continue to trade efficiently if they never set eyes on him. As he stands outside that building he stands outside the knowledge of the men inside. They are oblivious of him. Totally unaware of him, his message and his mission.

When the salesman goes into that building he goes as a stranger, alone and unasked. He has to get in, make contact and obtain an order from one or more of the prospects. He has to secure business to earn a decent livelihood and the more business he obtains the higher will be his standard of living. *There is a further consideration and one of greater importance than this man's standard of living. It is his standard of self-respect.*

No one has ever claimed that speciality selling is easy. It is tough, but it is exciting and rewarding. At least it is to some people.

There is that building. Now some men, but not your type, go in determined to create clients. They go in with

courage, expecting and intending to meet with success. They go forward because to take any other course is to invite defeat.

When you are confronted with such circumstances you turn away. You think it will be a useless, jolting endeavour.

In outward manner, in appearance, in product knowledge you have nothing to be ashamed of. And yet you live with shame. You don't make a go of it. I can't tell you—I wish I could—precisely how to change your mental attitude. All I know, and your friends know it too, is that you will be able to sell as soon as you really want to sell.

People with half your intelligence and ability are selling three times as much as you. Don't you ever ask yourself why? The answer is pretty obvious. They've got more courage, more enthusiasm, a much stronger desire to sell. They discipline themselves to success.

Sincerely,

STUART

ARE YOU "OFFERING FOR SALE" OR SELLING?

Dear Hamish,

The act of making a call, uttering words, and offering a product for sale but engaging in no real selling does not really entitle a man to class himself as a salesman. There are still plenty of men, trying to earn their living on the road, who believe that the obtaining of an order is based entirely on the functioning of certain simple processes. Get in front of a prospect, show him the product, list its specifications and qualities and let the prospect decide! It is bad luck when he turns you down, good luck when you get an order!

Offering a product for sale is not at all the same thing as actively selling that product. Registering an ability to supply is quite different from creating a demand.

Diligent representation certainly secures some orders. Hard slogging work produces results. A reliable man calling methodically on a sufficiency of relevant prospects is bound to obtain some business. There will be occasions when he calls just at the right time and his "offer for sale" will be taken up.

The reliable man, however, *who practises enthusiastic salesmanship* is sure to obtain a far higher turnover. The "traveller", the representative, the man who solicits business, is not necessarily a salesman.

Being face to face with the prospect, demonstrating the product and supplying data are very obvious necessities in making a sale, but they do not actually make the sale. To be in front of a prospect, to bring with one, for sale, a product or service, are but preliminaries to selling. *To succeed one has to perform and in the selling world performing necessitates selling.*

To a genuine salesman, selling means that he has got to influence, inspire, enthuse and encourage a fellow human to positive, decisive action. To do this successfully requires mental energy and resilience, strong will and a genuine understanding of human nature. The salesman creates an atmosphere around the product with the words he uses, the sincerity he transmits and the enthusiasm he generates. He also uses periods of silence, at appropriate times, with marked effect.

Other problems, other people, other places, other products are gently squeezed out of the prospect's mind. The salesman works to obtain interest, concentration and absorption from the prospect. *Good salesmen consistently work upon the minds and the emotions of their prospects. They deal in values and benefits in happiness, mental well-being and prosperity. They do not confine themselves to showing a product and offering it for sale.*

First-class selling requires dedication of purpose and the faith and tenacity of a pioneer. It needs the skill which is born of much practice and continuous study. Much more than hard physical work is necessary. The physical energy has to be backed by concentrated, highly intelligent thought. The will, the inner determination, needs to be developed so that the salesman has one dominant aim. To sell, sell, sell to all who can be considered to be legitimate prospects.

Sincerely,

STUART

MAKING PEOPLE WANT TO BUY

Dear Mike,

All of us, who earn our living by selling, clearly appreciate the following very simple fact. *We will not get an order from a prospect unless that prospect wants or needs to buy our product.* We have to go further than this. It is necessary to get the prospect to act in order to fulfil his desire or need.

The intention to obtain an order is one thing but, as we know, the fulfilment of the intention can often be a complicated process. No one has yet produced a workable chart which clearly sets out the desires, the hopes and the hidden fears in someone else's mind.

What do *you* think, for instance, is the most important factor in obtaining an order? I ask this because I wonder if you arrived at the same conclusion that I reached.

Some time ago, I was one of the speakers at a Company's sales conference in London. The title of the subject suggested to me was "Making People Want to Buy".

I tried to prepare for this talk as thoroughly as the occasion demanded. In working on my speech, I found myself collecting a pile of notes and cross-references, most of which ended up in the waste-paper basket. I listed what I thought I had learned, from my own sales experience, of buying motives. I consulted people more knowledgeable than myself and I referred to my library of sales books.

By the time I had finished my note-taking and my draft, I think I had covered many of the basic reasons which motivated purchase. I had worked out, in fair order, most of the factors which can make a prospect want to buy.

Only when I had finished this quite laborious task did a very important realisation dawn upon me. The most obvious thing, the very first essential, had been excluded. I had omitted the key factor which leads to orders. So I scrapped the original plans and worked on the speech again.

I believe the most imperative necessity, in any attempt to make a person want to buy, is this. The salesman has to want to sell. *The entire process of speciality selling begins with the wish and the intention to sell—and not with the intention to buy.*

Before the prospect will want to buy from the salesman, it is quite essential that the salesman should want to sell. This may not be entirely true of retail selling, but it is a primary truth of speciality selling.

To a large degree, a man's success as a salesman will bear a direct ratio to his own personal desire for success.

It is, of course, necessary to know and interpret the reasons why the prospect should want to buy. Both parties to the sale have to share this knowledge. The salesman, however, should also be fully conscious of why he wants to make the sale. He must be keen to make it and he must be aware of the benefits to himself. The benefits can be financial, they can be related to prestige, or be purely emotional. But, before he can motivate the prospect, it is essential for him to know why he, personally, wants and intends to sell to that man. If a salesman really desires to sell, his personal pattern of selling will begin to fall into place. He will take the trouble to learn and use the proper methods necessary for making people want to buy—from him.

Selling begins with the salesman. If your intention is to make people buy from you increasingly, then right at the very top of the requirements you need is a desire to

sell to them. If you want, very intensely, to make people buy from you (not just vaguely hope that they will do so) then a large number of prospects will become clients.

Sincerely,

STUART

A PEG FOR THE HAT

Dear Terence,

You've been to Eric's home so maybe you'll be able to give me an answer to this question. Is it true that there are no hat-pegs in his hall and that if you want to hang your hat up you find a peg in the dining-room, the kitchen or the bathroom? I wouldn't be surprised if that proved to be the case.

I've seen and heard, in business, a lot of Eric lately and he strikes me as being somewhat devoid of a piece of elementary sales knowledge. *He hardly seems to be aware of the fact that if you want the prospect to hang up his sales hat you've got to supply a sales peg.*

It's a saying of a salesman friend of mine that "I give him a peg on which to hang his hat."

What this phrase means is quite clear. The peg becomes the focal, see-able, believable, tangible, hard, orthodox reality on which to hang the hat—which is the order.

A peg is easily seen. A hat is easily seen but there is no physical contact between the two until the hat is hooked to the peg.

A reason for an order is one thing and an actual order something else. Unless the order is hooked to the specific reason there is no contact between the two. So the prospect has to be shown the reason (the peg) and led to the positive belief and desire to attach his order (the hat) to that particular reason. If a salesman cannot show the prospect clearly, very clearly, a peg on which to hang the hat then the prospect will find the hook elsewhere.

A salesman, to obtain an order, must show, prove and indicate to the prospect a profitable reason for placing an order.

Eric is a gimmick boy and I don't like gimmick salesmen. He seldom, if ever, supplies a good solid reason, a sound peg. He goes in for ingratiating, back-slapping, dubious charm and superficial personality selling. Logic, fact, reason and analysis are anathema to him.

That's why I doubt if he has a proper hat peg in his hall.

Not Eric. He's probably got a gaily coloured hammock strung up and coats and hats are thrust on to this. It's just the kind of gimmick that would appeal to him.

Sincerely,

STUART

THEY CALL YOU THE PUBLIC ANALYST

Dear Oliver,

Sooner or later you were bound to hear that you were called The Public Analyst back in the Head Sales Office. It's not unnatural that you feel a bit hurt, particularly as you don't appear to have a clue as to why you have been given this name.

You are one of those quite competent salesmen who could be a lot better if they would let themselves be. As you know, from your own sales figures, your position in the Company is assured. No one really wants to lose you and, in spite of your expressed discontents, you have little intention of moving to another Company.

But you persist in analysing every rebuff and every minor irritation of the day's work to such an extent that you risk becoming a bore.

It's true your Sales Manager once said at a sales meeting that *the men on the road should analyse their sales problems, break them down and overcome them. He meant exactly what he said. He did not mean that men should go and look for problems just in order to exercise their analytical faculties.*

Just look at the problems you create for yourself. Your product is not perfect. No one ever said it was, and it is doubtful if there ever has been a "perfect" product. The most expensive custom-built motor car in the world is not *perfect*, nor would the manufacturers claim that it was. It is difficult to park, cannot be placed in a small garage, and does not do 35 miles to the gallon. It may be a magnificent car but it is unlikely to be sold to, or used by, a man of modest means.

Your own product is very good, but of course there

are some who don't want it. This reality, however, should not prevent you from diligently locating an ever-widening range of prospects who do need it and can be induced to want it to the point of purchase.

Every product has drawbacks in certain circumstances. Get down to analysing them and you will mesmerise yourself out of sales. *Every* product has advantages. Concentrate on them and you make sales.

Now take your area. Naturally it could be better. So could everyone else's. Analyse its limitations and you will limit your performance.

And then there are your brochures and other printed sales aids. I would have thought they were adequate. Other salesmen in other Companies might envy you, but you don't envy yourself. You stare at them, you glare at them and inevitably you find minor defects which, unfailingly and dutifully, you report back. If those leaflets were printed on gold-embossed paper would *your* sales improve? I reckon you would then turn right around and start complaining about "Waste of money. Awful waste. How can they expect us to sell when they show such a flagrant lack of economy? Company's badly managed and that's the truth."

Part of a professional analyst's job is to pull things to pieces: your work is to get products accepted. Look for the best and don't search for the worst. Don't analyse yourself out of sales. I am sure your Sales Manager meant that after a sales failure the salesman should analyse the interview, in order to trace if, and where, he made an error or missed an opportunity. Not for a moment did he mean that one should cast criticism on everything and everybody other than oneself.

Sincerely,

STUART

INCONSPICUOUSLY WELL-DRESSED

Dear Randolph,

You may be interested in these comments that I heard the other day.

"No, I'm not very influenced by the fact that a salesman is well-dressed. Anyway, I expect him to be," said the Purchasing Officer of an electrical manufacturing company. "Appearance only weighs with me when there is something odd or slovenly about a man's turn-out and that's not often, because most salesmen have good clothes and wear them well.

"Of course, as far as my attitude is concerned, I'm only generalising, so don't take my remarks too literally. Out of every twenty salesmen I see, I think that one will be over-dressed. That is, he will be so sartorially elegant, and apparently conscious of the fact, that if I wasn't a tough old nut I'd be embarrassed about my own appearance.

"Then there will be about four of the twenty who quite obviously are a bit sloppy, though this varies from man to man. One of these gentlemen will surely be most unkempt. The other three may be just noticeably out of line. But seventy-five per cent will be neat, clean and inconspicuously well-dressed.

"The minor things I notice? Short socks which show the flesh of the leg. Creased suits and ties. Shoes which need a polish. Shirt cuffs not visible because they've been pulled up the elbow to hide the fact that they are dirty. Shirt collars which are frayed. Handkerchiefs in the breast pocket which are not clean—they show yesterday's dust. A button off a suit. Darns in the shirt where

collar ends have worn the material. These and other things which cause a critical reaction.

"I wouldn't say every oddly dressed salesman is no good at selling. I know some good men whose appearance may irritate their Sales Directors. These fellows, though, are always clean even though they may be untidy. It's safe to say, though, that most men who act like business men, dress like business men."

It's surprising, isn't it, that there are still some shabby salesmen about?

Sincerely,
STUART

"I still think it's an unbusiness-like method of assigning territories."

GAINING EXPERIENCE

Dear Alistair,

A young salesman should not be too concerned with the size of his personal earnings. Too great a desire for immediate high-level remuneration can lead to a false sense of perspective which prejudices the chance of large earnings in the future.

His first concern should be to gain experience with a reliable Company. Only a good firm can assist the young man to gain from, and interpret, the experiences which he encounters in his work.

If a man takes up selling as a career he should treat it as a career and be encouraged to accept the long-term view. Most doctors and solicitors earn a high income once they are established. However, they have to put in long years of training.

Circumstances being what they are, a salesman's theoretical training is short, if indeed he receives any at all. In most instances he has to learn the job as he does it, but his path is eased, in a reliable Company, by practical help and guidance.

His first objective should be to produce a sufficient turnover to cover his costs to his Company. His second should be to earn sufficient to enable him to maintain a reasonable standard of life. When this is done he should try not to be tempted by constant thoughts of the size of his income. At an early age such considerations can be unsettling. He tends to overestimate his capabilities, his importance and his market value.

The young man's immediate object should be to learn all he can about selling and to acquire first-class

experience. Only when he has acquired ability and experience should he be actively concerned with his level of income.

Sincerely,
STUART

THE FIRST MAN YOU SEE

Dear Hugo,

Turning through some notes the other day I came across this quotation from the *North-Western National News*. It read:

"Unless a salesman sells the first man he sees in the morning, he need not hold out much hope of selling others he is to see during the day. *The first man he sees will appear in his mirror.*"

It's an apt statement. When you get up in the morning and see the reflection of your face in the mirror, you are looking at the man who has got to go out and convince other people of the benefits to be obtained from doing business with him.

If you are not thoroughly "sold" on your product and the value of your work then you are going to find it somewhat difficult to enthuse other people.

Sincerely,
STUART

VIEW SELLING IN PERSPECTIVE

Dear Dennis,

We read and hear so much of the inspirational and creative aspects of selling that now and again it does us good, if only to bring us into contact with harsh reality, to ponder on the failures.

If you saw the play, or the film, "Death of A Salesman" you will recall those words of sad, sad poetry when Willy Lomax was buried. Charley, who had always tried to help him, said:

"Nobody dast blame this man. You don't understand: Willy was a salesman. And for a salesman, there is no rock bottom to the life. He don't put a bolt to a nut, he don't tell you the law or give you medicine. He's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoe-shine. And when they start not smiling back—that's an earthquake. And then you get yourself a couple of spots on your hat and you're finished. Nobody dast blame this man. A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory."

Willy, who had committed suicide, was buried and no buyer came to pay his last respects. Willy had been sure that there would have been a queue of buyers to say farewell.

The saga of Willy Lomax was that of a hard-working, lovable man who was not, and never had been, a very good salesman. He would not and could not accept that fact. As he grew older he "sold himself" to the point of folly. He lived in a world of childish illusion and pathetic delusion. In his late hour of great economic need he

turned down a safe, steady job, he was about sixty, in order to go on failing as a salesman. He committed suicide so that his wife would have the insurance.

He thought he was bigger than he was. That was not so bad because his thoughts might have led to growth. The tragedy was that he thought he was bigger than it would ever have been possible for him to become. He was always chasing a rainbow without knowing it was a rainbow.

One of a salesman's most difficult tasks is to measure his capabilities and balance his personal judgment. To work for a hard to attain, but realisable, future is a good thing. But to go on believing the sky is the limit may destroy a man with the bitterness of failure. The only point in the sky that he is likely to reach is the moon and everything then becomes moonshine. A man must have a target he can hit.

Sincerely,

STUART

"When you said you'd sold 100,000,000 in your previous employment, I didn't realise you'd been a jelly bean salesman."

ON NOT BEING FUNNY

Dear Nigel,

You may rock them in the Bar at The Ploughman's Rest with your humour. In her drawing-room, Aunt Agatha may chortle at your jokes. Curious as it seems, however, even the best natured of prospects doesn't appear to be in harmony with your jocularity, even though most of it is good clean fun.

This may seem strange to you in a country renowned for its sense of humour, but there are a number of good reasons for steering clear of being funny when selling. There's a place and time for all things and when the prospect wishes to be entertained by a humorist he has a world of talent from which to choose. From Bob Hope to Terry-Thomas, from Fernandel to Tony Hancock.

People have a great tendency to take others at their own valuation—at any rate until such time as they know them well enough to pierce any façade. If a man talks like a pompous egotist he will initially be taken as such. If a man tends to clown whilst doing his work he can blame no one for accepting him as a clown.

Buying is a serious business. Selling is a serious business. If you take buying and selling seriously, people will accept you as a responsible person and give your words due respect and attention. One of the most pathetic things is to watch and listen to a salesman trying to tell funny stories to a prospect he does not know very well. If the salesman's idea is to impress or please the prospect, and this presumably is the idea, then he would have been infinitely wiser to stick to his sales story.

Being witty is entirely different from trying to be

funny. An occasional shaft of spontaneous wit at the appropriate time can very often illuminate a sales point. Wit, however, is a very rare commodity and its lucky possessors generally have the sophistication to handle it with great care.

So keep your funny stories and your practical jokes for your friends and relatives.

If you feel you really *are* a funny man then, no doubt, your place is in the entertainment industry.

In selling, you must certainly cultivate a cheerful personality. And a smile is always a tremendous asset.

Remember, however, that the prospect intends to do business with solid citizens and not with amateur court jesters.

Sincerely,
STUART

DON'T GET UPSET

Dear Fred,

It appears that you are one of the quite numerous salesmen who possess considerable sensitivity and who, from time to time, can throw a petulant bout of temperament around the place. I don't really think this should be taken too seriously because good selling demands a man of imagination, a man of enterprise and a man who is prepared to stand up for himself. Zombies don't make salesmen.

Quite often the very qualities that go to assist a man in becoming a good salesman, the qualities that give him a touch of the thoroughbred on the job, also result in

him becoming singularly susceptible to what he imagines is criticism and interference. He is sometimes inclined to mistake a genuine display of assistance as unwarranted interference and this is, very unfortunately, true when he receives a letter from Head Office.

Whilst displays of temperament in a salesman are understandable to anyone who has been a salesman, it doesn't mean to say that they are generally excusable. More often than not they cause destructive damage and the person they injure most is the salesman himself.

When you first started on the road you were keen and anxious to accept help and advice from everybody capable of giving it. Now that you've established yourself as a young salesman of some repute you appear to resent any communication from your Sales Manager. *When he writes to you it is absolutely essential to bear in mind that it is his intention to help you.* You may not read it that way but that is his intention.

He happens, in your particular case, to be a very good Sales Manager. At all times, try to remember not only that he is twenty years older than you but that he has twenty years more of selling experience.

He's carried a bag—like you. He's worked his way up. He's done it all himself and has worked, talked and thought selling with considerable intensity and merit.

To-day he has but one aim and ambition, and that is to lead a good sales team to increasing success. To achieve this he has to expand turnover with the assistance of the men at his disposal. There are thirty-seven of those men, of whom you are one. Your Sales Manager knows very well that he hasn't got the best thirty-seven men in the world and, being realistic, he knows that he will never have them.

He is, however, determined to have the most able

thirty-seven men that circumstances permit. More important, he rightly considers that it is his duty to try and make the best of the men at his disposal. The success of the Company's sales effort is in the hands of those people at present engaged as members of the sales force.

When you receive a suggestion or comment from your Sales Manager, always bear in mind that it is his intention at all times, to help you—not hinder you. From what you tell me, some of his letters appear to irritate you. I suggest you keep them all on file. Look back on them after a period of six months and you will be amazed, and somewhat contrite, to discover just how right he was in the light of events and how unbalanced was your own reaction at the time.

Give your Sales Manager the benefit of the doubt as often as you can. He is paid to know and to impart his knowledge. Surprising as it may sometimes seem to you, he is generally right. One day, maybe, you'll be a Sales Manager yourself, dealing with the type of keen, headstrong and thoroughly opinionated young man that you resemble to-day.

If that occurs you will, believe me, hold your old chief in the greatest esteem, and you may wonder what qualities you now share with him that prevent you "going round the bend" in attempting to deal with the extraordinarily varied array of men in your sales force.

You will find that balanced judgment, a desire to be fair and knowing when a man needs guidance, play a far, far greater part than you at present imagine.

Sincerely,

STUART

TENSION AND WORRY DON'T HELP SELLING

Dear Clive,

Doing things the easy way is quite a different matter from "taking things easy". And no one ever said that the necessity to relax meant the same as being a lazy lotus eater. A sense of timing indicates just the opposite from leaping on to a train as it pulls away from the platform.

I make these observations because it is quite obvious to most of your friends, if not to you, that you have coiled thick ropes of tension, anxiety and worry round yourself.

As a salesman you have limited your performance because *the job has got right on top of you instead of you getting mentally on top of the job.* As you go round your territory you are shadow boxing with yourself. And you notice a lot of shadows.

Salesmen who don't work or won't work are simple propositions to deal with. Even in these times of full employment they are non-paying passengers and have to be off-loaded.

Yours is quite a different case. You work with the intensity of a beaver but without that sagacious animal's calmness of manner. You certainly work but oh! how you worry. The strain of mental tension you place upon yourself, the anxieties created in your mind, must enormously limit the pleasure you obtain from your work.

Watch the top professionals in any line of business. You'll notice that although they work hard, and concentrate, they always do things the simplest and most direct way.

We all know just how important selling is. Even so, there are times when you must relax, you must ease up.

Working out a sales story at home is a healthy and profitable mental exercise. Worrying yourself into a state of frenzy because someone is doing better than you, and unburdening your complexes on anyone in hearing distance, is a complete waste of time.

As you know, I greatly admire the top American writers on salesmanship. I think the help we can get from them is great. However, the other day, I read something with which I strongly disagree. The advice imparted was that salesmen should read a book on selling just before dropping off to sleep.

This suggestion is, I think, acceptable for a man of phlegmatic outlook but not for one who tends to brood and fret.

I thought this advice, without qualification, was inapplicable to a man of your temperament. One doubts if you would ever get to sleep at all. A little light music from a bedside radio, the reading of a novel—yes—but not a book on selling. Your mind should be as far from thoughts of your job as possible during the last half-hour before falling off to sleep. Certainly you should read books on salesmanship. Before dinner, after dinner, whilst having lunch, at the week-end, but not just before you are due to go to sleep.

Worry, anxiety, poring over problems which exist only in the imagination, tension and touchiness really don't help you sell because they place you under severe mental strain.

Only by getting things in proportion and perspective can worry be cured. You must relax, you must let the springs of tension unwind.

If, however, you simply *have* to worry, then maybe this advice will help. Concentrate your worries on your sales story—nothing else. Worry is like a terrier working

on a bone. If by doing this you can achieve a first-class sales story and presentation built around a good product, you will never have to worry about anything else in selling. With a first-class sales story you will become a professional—doing things the easiest way. Tenseness will depart with the inflow of orders.

Sincerely,
STUART

"I am a dynamic, well-groomed salesman. . . .
I am a dynamic, well-groomed salesman. . . ."

AN ACTION BOOK

Dear Edward,

It is very helpful to keep an easily compiled Action Book.

The purpose of this book is to supply a constant reminder of matters which need definite action. It serves a different purpose from that fulfilled by the standard notebook, a diary or a record book.

It encourages immediate action on a detail of business. It is not intended as a storehouse of prospect information or as a depository for statistics.

One of the simplest and most effective of such books is the type used by many staff-sergeants in Army offices.

A large, lined exercise book is obtained. Heavy black lead or ink rulings are made throughout the book, every three or four lines.

Between these rulings, various items needing action are jotted down—a separate space is allocated to each.

Typical items might read, "Ring Ralph re advice on Brown and Co.", "Find out time of early morning train to Liverpool", "Obtain fresh supply of report forms", "Telephone Jones for appointment". When action has been taken the entry is crossed out. A quick glance through the book, at any time, shows what items are still outstanding and need to be dealt with.

Making an entry is a matter of seconds. As soon as the book is finished it can be thrown away, after outstanding items have been transferred, as it is not a book of data about what has occurred but purely a memory-jogger relating to future action.

Sincerely,

STUART

ANYTHING BUT MAGIC

Dear Harry,

Sorry to disillusion you, but there's no foundation in fact to your idea that this country's top salesmen are members of The Magic Circle. They haven't got a wand and they don't deal in mysteries or sleight of hand.

On several occasions I've heard young beginners to selling, and also some older but not very successful salesmen, say, after meeting an outstanding business producer, something like this. "Well, he's an awfully nice fellow and seems full of drive but he didn't give me the feeling that I'd learned a secret which would immediately enable me to go out and land a big order."

What did these people expect? That the first-class salesman would write a few words for them on a piece of paper, and that from then on everything would be easy. Just whisper the magic words into the prospect's ear and, hey presto, the prospect is turned into a client. It just doesn't work like that.

In my boyhood, being very keen on cricket, one of the thrills of my life was to be introduced to the great Jack Hobbs. I remember asking how I could play like him and he said, "Play with a straight bat, study cricket, think about cricket and practise, practise, practise." I was terribly disappointed because I thought this world-famous batsman, just by speaking to me, would enable me to score a century forthwith. This did not, unfortunately, take place.

When the outstanding salesmen started their careers they possessed no special facilities. They started as you started.

What has made them outstanding is, in the main, the

following qualities. (*a*) An aptitude for hard work on the road. (*b*) An ability, which can be acquired, to plan their time. (*c*) Will power. (*d*) Thinking about their approach to selling in general and each prospect in particular. (*e*) Studying by reading and practical observation of the work of others. (*f*) Knowing their product, its strengths and limitations. (*g*) Putting service before self. (*h*) Reliability, coupled with great enthusiasm.

You ask, where's the star quality? Where's the touch of genius? You say there's nothing unique about these qualities and less successful men possess them in varying degrees. Well, you can give different cooks the same materials and get very different results when it comes to the finished dish.

In other words, it's what these fine salesmen do with what they've got that counts. The principles of selling and the leading techniques are on record for all to learn. You will find them in books and experienced men will tell you what to do and what not to do. Certainly, the first thing is to obtain the know-how, but the all important thing is what you do with what you know.

Star salesmen will tell you what they say and how they say it. But they cannot pass over to you the inner strength and confidence that they possess, nor their individuality of approach. Such qualities are personal to each man, as is his attitude of mind.

Rome was not built in a day and a great salesman is not made with his first big order. He becomes that way through a long, long succession of experiences which have left him as fresh, hopeful and enthusiastic to-day as when he first started on the road.

More than anybody else *you* can help *yourself* sell.

Sincerely,

STUART

HE FAILED AS A SALESMAN

Dear Donald,

Is it possible for an intelligent, highly educated young man to fail as a salesman? I was asked this question the other day by someone who held the theory that "anyone can sell".

I am quite sure that such a young man can fail, even allowing for his having the qualifications outlined above. I know such a man. He is also sound in wind and limb, possesses the social graces and has no financial worries. During the war he was a successful officer and immediately after the war held an administrative post of importance. He is also a hard and conscientious worker.

He took to the road when he acquired an interest in a small business. Although he did secure some orders he himself failed to secure a sufficiency of business and was out-sold by other, and less talented, people connected with his Company.

His fault was lack of sympathy with his prospects (which they probably detected) and a lack of appreciation of their problems. Whenever he failed to obtain an order he genuinely considered, in practically every case, that the prospect was a blithering idiot and that there was something dolefully amiss with an economic structure which kept such a foolish firm outside the bankruptcy courts.

When he failed to obtain orders, any concern as to failure on his part was always superficial. The fault, according to him, lay with the prospect who, of course, was an imbecile type.

This young man did not have an appreciation of the fact that selling demands even more than the serving of an apprenticeship which, anyway, he had not served.

Selling needs an esteem and affection for other people. It necessitates an ability and a desire to assist them.

It is quite possible for intelligent and energetic people to fail in selling. They are reasonably sure to fail if they do not have sincere respect for the majority of their prospects and clients as well as contagious enthusiasm for their product.

The "take it or leave it and if you leave it you're the sufferer" philosophy leads to failure. Self-confidence and self-respect are valuable weapons but they have to be seasoned with a concern for the business interests of other people.

Of course, the young man to whom we have referred did not like selling. He told me he positively detested it.

Whether his lack of success was because of his dislike for the work, or his dislike of the work was brought about by his lack of success, was something that we never quite discovered.

He remained with his Company, doing an office job. No sooner off the road than he became, in his own opinion, an authority on selling. Having failed himself, he found solace by making "expert" comments on the sales performance of others.

The idea that "anyone can sell" is, we believe, fallacious. There are certain introvert types who can never bring themselves to sell with enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the great generating force of salesmanship. Another most important essential is to have sympathy for, and interest

in, other people. Without these qualities it is extremely difficult to sell and quite impossible to be happy in one's work.

Sincerely,
STUART

ON NOT BEING A POSTMAN

Dear Vernon,

It was only the other day that you made some complimentary remarks about the efficiency with which the postal services worked. You said that in spite of the occasional error, and allowing for the criticisms that sometimes reach the Press, postmen and postal officials do a remarkably good job.

They do indeed Vernon, they do indeed, and few people are better qualified to judge than you. Certainly there are times when I begin to feel that you have missed your vocation. From some of your selling performances one gathers the impression that you would have made an extremely efficient postman.

The fact of the matter is, though, that you are *not* employed by your firm as a special executive postman but as a salesman. *You are not paid to be a manual carrier of written messages. The intention is to reward you for conducting an intelligent, convincing, business conversation and for bringing that discussion to a satisfactory conclusion.*

It is perfectly correct to say that your Company produces extremely good brochures, leaflets and data sheets and that they wish these to be studied by the right

people. This printed material is issued for the sole purpose of assisting and encouraging the promotion of sales. As you know, the main bulk of this sales promotional matter is posted to carefully selected people. Whilst this direct mail propaganda sometimes brings back orders without a personal call, the main intention of the pretty constant mailing is one of general sales promotion policy. The idea is to "soften" the market for the men on the road, to build product acceptance, to keep prospects and clients fully alive to your Company, its products and activities. This printed material forms a very important link in the sales chain.

It costs much money to prepare. It costs money for secretarial labour to address the envelopes. But the actual cost, to your Company, of the physical transportation of your largest brochure from your office to the prospect, is 4d. for the stamp at the printed paper rate.

If the dizzy height of your personal sales effort on a call, the very pinnacle of your sales uppercut, is to say, "Well, sir, here is our brochure. I hope you will read it if, and when, you have the time," then you are completely wasting your Company's money.

The cost of your transport, salary and share of the overheads is many, many times 4d. You are not employed to do the job of a postman. Nor are you a postage stamp.

When you call on a prospect *you* are supposed to do the selling. The brochure is not supposed to do the selling for you. If this were the case it would be quite unnecessary to employ you.

Of course, during your sales conversation, you should show it whenever necessary. But you should use it skilfully, pointing out those special phrases or illustrations to the prospect which help to augment the need that you, by this time, have crystallised within him. If it is relevant

to use the brochure, then make it assist your sale—as it was intended to do. Do not make it an excuse for failing to sell effectively and energetically. It's no good hoping that the brochure will make an order for you. A salesman makes his own orders and sales aids can only *assist* him.

If it so happens that your brochure is a better salesman in print than you are in person, then take a tip, Vernon. There's a very big labour shortage at the Post Office. You may be welcome.

Sincerely,
STUART

"Where's MY pin?"

A MAN OF REPUTE

Dear Henry,

Two weeks from now you'll be making your first calls alone on the road. After your expensive education at school, and then university, this will be a new life for you. Each working day you will be meeting a varied array of people whose attitudes, backgrounds, manners, hopes and ambitions differ from each other.

The road you are going to travel can take you a very long way to success or it can be a dead end. To a very considerable degree your ultimate destination is influenced by the spirit, as well as the skill, in which you make your journey.

Anyway, I'm not going to write to you about selling your product. The Company you have joined possess a good sales training course (which is still quite a rarity in commerce) and you are just completing it. Your product, which is a worthy one, you know far more about than I do.

There is something else I want to emphasise to you. It is simply this. From the time you start making your calls alone you are—Your Company. The grammar of that sentence may be poor, but the implications are tremendous. *In your area you will be, in the eyes of clients and prospects, your Company. You will be the living, personal representation of the Company.*

Your clients may correspond with Head Office, study the price lists that reach them through the post, be very aware of your firm's advertising and place orders on the telephone.

In spite of all this they will, once you have met them,

persist in thinking of you as personifying the Company. You are their contact man, and if they think highly of you they will tend to think highly of your firm. If they find you difficult or unpleasant, only the most impartial of them will be able to resist the temptation to associate the Company with these thoughts. The good Company wants good men on the road because it ensures and insures the good reputation of the firm. *A good reputation is just about the highest accolade a business man and a business house can possess.*

Now, of course, the pattern is not always even. There are buyers who have the following reactions and are quite justified because the circumstances do occur.

They say, "I don't like that salesman they send around. There's something about him I don't admire. Wish they'd change him. But his products are good and so unless, and until, I can find as fine a product at the right price, I'll have to deal with the fellow." The other reaction is, "He's a first-class chap. Like him very much. Wish I could do business with him. It's unfortunate his product's not applicable to us."

In these two cases you will see that the attitude of the buyer to the salesman has not affected the sale because it would have been bad business to allow personality preference to overcome actual buying expediency. However, had the two instances not been so extreme the buyer might well have been influenced by his personal preferences.

As I said earlier, you will be meeting many types of people. They will undoubtedly share, in common, the definite tendency to judge the type of man your firm employs by their judgment of you.

If they find you pleasant, helpful and well-mannered, they will have friendly feelings towards your Company.

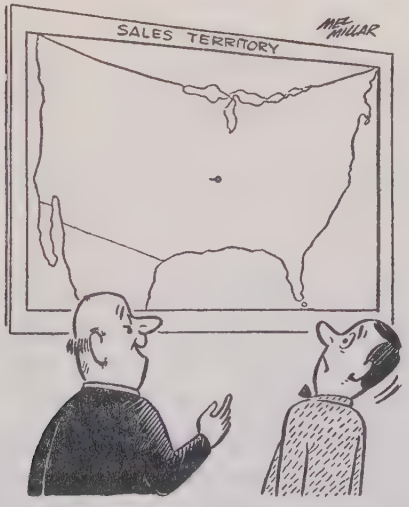
If they should think you inconsiderate and inefficient they will harden to your firm.

At all times and in all ways you must remember that you are your Company. As long as you are with them you are their Ambassador. In your area you represent them. *You are their trusted man of affairs.* It lies within your power, by your personal conduct towards the men and women you will meet every day, to enhance still further your firm's reputation or to lower it.

Of course, to be well liked and respected does not make you a salesman at all. You also have to sell and the more you sell, the faster will be your progress. But however well you sell it is impossible for you, or anyone else, to climb to the top echelon in an old-established Public Company, such as yours, unless you are a man of repute.

Sincerely,

STUART



"To begin with you'll have a rather large territory."

Appendix

THE MARKET IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT —BY SALESMANSHIP

by R. Isdell-Carpenter

The Incorporated Sales Managers Association organised a conference at the Royal Festival Hall in London in 1958 on the theme of "Alerting Managers for a Salesmanship Economy". Mr. R. Isdell-Carpenter, then Sales Director of A.E.I.-Hotpoint Ltd., addressed the conference on The Market Is What You Make It—By Salesmanship *and he has given permission for his speech to be reprinted here. He said:*

When I first read the title to this paper it made me stop and think. And that, when all of us have to read so much paper and so many written words pass before our eyes in our daily work, is a great tribute to those who have planned the theme of this Annual Conference, and I pay it warmly.

Having thought, I decided that the statement "The Market is what you make it—by Salesmanship" is so obviously correct because selling and salesmanship are for me another way of saying "adventure". And if you don't look at the job of selling as an adventure full of possibilities—full of more possibilities during the course of each single day than perhaps any other job—you don't succeed in selling very much.

I fully realise that in addressing this Conference I am speaking to many people who have had many years of practical selling experience and that a very wide range of business and commodities is represented here. I therefore do so with a good deal of humility and in no sense am I aiming at teaching other people their business. My object is to give you my own views about the vital importance of a really reliable efficient sales force in expanding a market; and to look at the selling job from the point of view of a salesman and from the point of view of those who direct his efforts and look to him for results. And I repeat that they are my own personal views.

A Guess can be Costly

My first line of approach is that most markets are assessable and probably expandable. Whether it is really worth while to expand a particular market must depend on the cost of doing so and the volume of profit you get when you have secured the share at which you aimed.

Consider how some markets have in fact been expanded in goods with which we are familiar in our daily lives: scooters and small estate cars, ball-point pens, drip-dry shirts, cigarette lighters, glasses styled for feminine appeal, cold-mix drinks, wrapped sweets, do-it-yourself kits ranging from home-made furniture to home-made sailing boats, inexpensive made-to-measure suits, plastic washing-up bowls and watering cans, garden cultivators, computers, quick-frozen foods, and so on. The list is endless, but let it not omit washing machines and refrigerators in which I have a certain interest.

In my view, nowadays, the personal arbitrary approach by a manufacturer to what the market needs is as dead as a dodo. The decision based on "I know what is wanted. Make it pink and see it tastes of lemon", or "Make it six

inches taller: my wife tells me that's what's wanted", may well be doomed to failure. As everybody knows, there are experts available whose services can help enormously to reduce personal bias and prejudice in these matters. The decision to make and sell a particular thing can be crystallised to a point when you know for a fact that by tailoring the product to what your public wants—your customer public, I mean—you are reducing the element of guesswork to fairly small proportions. It is expensive but well worth while. A guess can be even more costly.

The Selection of a Salesman

But let us assume that the market assessment has been made, the product has been designed to give value for money and quality, styled to meet the demand, priced fairly against competition, and advertised widely and well. In other words, the sales force have a product of which they can rightly be proud and which they can confidently sell to those outlets through which it will reach the eventual users.

What are my duties, as the Sales Manager or Sales Director, to that Company's sales force?

I cannot list them all, obviously, but to expand a market by salesmanship, the ones I choose are these:

First: *train them.* I think the hardest choice to make is the selection of a salesman, largely because his success will depend on his attitude; his attitude to the job and the situations he meets.

Accompanying the Salesman

Salesmen have to operate without their hands being held, and the training a salesman gets must essentially do two things. It must inform him about his Company's policy, products and place in the total market, its aims

and its intentions; and it must also make him see for himself and believe that the methods the training advocates are the best for him to follow. If the training fails in this second respect he will nod his head and agree with the trainer—and carry on as he always did. Just as the object of selling is to influence a buyer's mind to take action, so a training course for salesmen fails if it does not influence the salesman's mind to take action and improve *his* methods thereafter.

Central training is not an expensive affair; apart from the content of the course itself, the benefits the salesmen gain in confidence, knowledge and morale from meeting the top management and their fellow salesmen are remarkable. Nor is central training something for the younger men only. There are few who do not benefit whatever their age or service.

Secondly: *follow it up.* Accompaniments by Sales Managers of District, Area or higher level are absolutely vital. The trade is delighted to see one, and I know from my own experience as a salesman how valuable such an accompaniment can be. The salesman gets the benefit of personal attention and advice and the Manager keeps in touch with the quality of the salesman's work and the thinking of the trade. The more one gets out, the greater the value all round. But I would stress that I think the accompaniment of salesmen on journey is an art and it needs to be mastered well.

That Extra Effort and Performance

Thirdly: *give targets.* Good salesmen quickly respond to individual targets and would soon feel lost without them. But the setting of group targets, and personal targets in particular, requires very careful assessment of what is reasonably achievable, given that extra effort and

performance which can help to expand a market; and it clearly needs sound data on which it can be based.

Fourthly: *give incentives.* Targets and incentives go hand in hand, whether those incentives are for group or personal sales performance. Collective group loyalty and performance are of great importance, but without individual targets and incentives group performance may well be less high. By personal targets and incentives, the Sales Manager can give credit where credit is due and those who deserve the extra reward are the ones who get it. It is not easy to assess whether incentives in cash or incentives in kind carry the most attraction; but because salesmen, like all of us here, work to obtain negotiable currency, I suspect that money is the most attractive incentive of all.

The fact remains that good salesmen, in my experience, like change and welcome opportunity, and incentives are improved and continue to produce more sales if their appeal can be kept fresh. Of course incentives add to the cost of running a sales force, but, if properly designed, the cost is money well spent; the alternative may be production decreasing, and that may cost even more.

The Salesman's Duties

Fifthly: *give them support and authority.* A trained salesman in a shop is the nearest the Company itself, the Board of Directors or the Managing Director can get to being physically present there. The salesman therefore speaks and acts with the full authority of the Company and whatever he does he should be backed to the hilt, even if the decision he takes is wrong. I think a salesman should be encouraged to settle matters then and there to the limit of his authority. He *is* the Company during the call, guided by his knowledge of Company policy, and

he needs to know that he has authority to represent the Company fairly and expeditiously. If his decision and action are wrong, he must be told so privately, and in no uncertain terms, but that is an internal matter for his management to settle and correct so it does not recur. Salesmen who know they have such full support gain from it both confidence and stature.

Now for the other side of the picture.

What are the salesman's duties to his Company, through his operating management and ultimately through the Head of the Sales Department?

First: *secure orders.* That statement is so obvious that you may wonder why I make it. But to salesmen whom I have met at various times in the past it is not obvious at all that they are there to get—to secure—orders and not merely to pick up gratefully and accept orders that were coming anyway. *Their* call has merely saved the buyer writing-paper and stamp, and cost their Company much more than that.

What Salesmen are Paid To Do

Good salesmen understand that the reason why they are called "salesmen" and not "travellers" or "representatives" is because the title "salesman" describes exactly what they are paid to do. And they also realise that until they do secure orders the most efficient market research, the best design, the finest and most up-to-date production methods, the finest product, the advertising campaign, have not even started to benefit the Company, let alone pay their own salary and incentives.

How easy and how pleasant it is for a salesman to make what is in effect a social call on a buyer! Time to gossip, time to chat, time to smoke, time for a "cuppa", time for almost everything except getting to the point

and doing what he is paid to do—secure orders! Thinks: "A very pleasant call, *and* I picked up an order, too!"

Little does that salesman know that his competitor, who has done a proper selling job, has booked an order perhaps five times the size in half the time, because the buyer wanted to buy, and has a singular respect for a thoroughly businesslike salesman.

I firmly believe myself that with good sales representation in the field, calls on buyers should be pleasant and mutually enjoyed, but all too often salesmen think that a social call as I have described it is the proper way to do their job. I cannot see any market expanding through such men.

The Profit in the Deal

So a salesman's *second duty,* which is bound up with his first, is this: *bring good and interesting news.*

Many buyers see several salesmen from different companies each day; at a guess it might range from three or four to ten or twelve. I suspect that when each salesman calls, the buyer is hoping—possibly against hope—that this time he will hear news. He is tired of being asked if he wants any. Instead, he longs to be told good, sound and positive reasons why he should buy more than he was going to buy anyway.

As a buyer he wants to hear what's new in a product, in a proposition, by way of an incentive to him, in the way of display material or a display competition. If there's nothing new like that, he is still interested to hear why he should buy that particular product rather than others, why the product is superior to others, why the market is developing and whether his buying record shows he's getting his fair share of it. Unless he knows about the product he cannot recommend and sell. And

above all he wants to know what profit there is for him if he agrees to the salesman's proposition and orders a quantity greater than he originally intended.

So far as I am aware, there are only two reasons why anyone in business should buy anything to retail. One reason is pleasure: the other is profit. If any buyer buys for pleasure, he will not be there for long to go on doing so. And I have never yet met a buyer who was not acutely interested in profit. Therefore the good salesman supports his story by explaining the profit the buyer will make.

Three Selling Requirements

When a salesman makes a call and personally contacts the man or woman who has authority to buy, he has a golden opportunity ahead of him, and this is what I had in mind when I said earlier that, to me, salesmanship means adventure. The salesman has a potential audience willing and keen to listen provided the salesman tells him something that is interesting and news, and provided also the salesman does three things:

(1) Knows what to say;

(2) knows how to say it; and

(3) knows when to stop!

—and of these three, I suspect that buyers wish that some salesmen were more skilled at number 3! These three skills, acquired by training, field advice, practice and applying a sense of atmosphere and tact, make up most of the skill in negotiation.

The first—knowing what to say—needs much study by the salesman of his product and its advantages, of the buyer and his history and of the presentation of his case.

Personal Qualifications

The second—knowing how to say it—covers the use of all the personal qualities he possesses; his manners, his cheerfulness, his expressiveness and enthusiasm, his showmanship, his confidence and, above all, his courage.

The third—knowing when to stop—is achieved by realising that the buyer also has a point of view, by a sense of atmosphere and, like a good letter writer, by putting himself in the buyer's situation.

I am sure that, with a product in demand, there is just that bit more than the buyer is willing to buy, over and above what he was going to order anyway, that can be sold, and willingly accepted, if a salesman does these things; and when it happens, the salesman has expanded the market at that particular call. If the buyer says "No", and the salesman recognises that as the point when his skill in selling really starts, that salesman is earning his keep.

Thirdly: *show samples.* Television is so powerful because it captivates our eyesight and our hearing. Buyers have eyes as well as ears, and a salesman who relies only on his spoken words and does not seek to impart his information and present his case through the buyer's sight as well is doing only half the job.

The Value of Energy

Fourthly: *secure displays.* A good salesman's job has two parts to it. One is the negotiation and agreement of the order; the other is helping the buyer to move the goods he has bought by placing well the supporting display material. If he secures no order, the second part is still his duty to his Company and the buyer. Without such displays at point of sale, a great deal of the value

of a skilled and powerful advertising campaign is lost and wasted. But a salesman worth his salt will always carry the buyer with him in the use of display material and secure his full agreement.

Fifthly: *be energetic.* Every salesman knows how suddenly his day's plans can go completely astray, often through no fault of his own. The car breaks down, or traffic is thick, or the buyer is out, or competitors are there before him and he has to wait. The wise salesman breaks the back of his day's work by lunch-time, with an early start and a plan for the day.

Energy in a salesman I always regard as evidence of self-discipline, and if a salesman lacks self-discipline, he cannot hope to contribute towards expanding any market. Buyers respect an energetic salesman who is conscious that their time too is valuable, but nevertheless presents his case fully, concisely and convincingly; and that is what his Company is paying him to do.

Energy in completing his paper work for the day and promptness in its despatch are also signs of self-discipline. Time is the most precious commodity we have in prosecuting business, and no one engaged in selling can afford to waste any of it. When I was on the road, at intervals I used to time each call throughout the day and was appalled to see how time slipped by without noticing it; a salutary reminder and one which I commend.

Success does not "Just Happen"

Sixthly: *analyse results.* Success is never something that "just happens", and nor is failure either. The handle did not just "come away" in the housemaid's hands. The silly creature broke it, and blamed events and not herself.

There is always a reason for failure and always a reason for success, and it behoves a salesman to think

back in either event and see what he can learn from it to help him in the future.

A salesman who wants to succeed will also realise that the longer he stays in the territory the greater may be the risk that he is falling into a rut. His methods seem to be all right: the business is not falling off; it's not increasing much either, but then there's always plenty of reasons for that. Nothing to do with him, of course: just the way business is everywhere? Perhaps!

And lastly: *study people*. The situations a salesman meets are largely composed of people and their reactions, and the salesman who studies people—and starts by studying himself and his own reactions—will be well on the way to studying selling techniques. And let him read and be inquisitive and seek to learn from anyone who he thinks can give him ideas.

In these ways, therefore, I believe the market *can* be what you make it—by salesmanship.

The Opportunities are Very Great

Success requires from management, thought and planning and drive and initiative, and above all a keen understanding of the tremendous power and strength in a lively adventurous sales force of men who know their duties and thoroughly enjoy doing them. From the salesmen themselves, market expansion comes by planned presentation and diligence, backed by loyalty and pride. And the opportunities for many of us are, I am sure, very great.

There must be many here to-day who are familiar with the book *Self Help* by Samuel Smiles, now just republished in a centenary edition. It contains a lot of very good sense which is as true to-day as when it was first written in 1859, and I often commend it to salesmen as

a useful reading exercise. Two passages in it are singularly appropriate to the theme of this Conference to-day. Indeed, I think they can guide and help all of us who sell, whatever our level may be. First, "Men who are resolved to find a way for themselves will always find opportunities enough; and if they do not lie ready to their hand, they will make them." The second is this (and Smiles is quoting Disraeli)—"We put too much faith in systems and look too little to men."

This is **CEDAR SPECIAL No. 106**

LETTERS TO SALESMEN

by

Stuart Thomson

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When Stuart Thomson first began to write about selling in 1955 he obtained his material from his daily experiences as a speciality salesman. He was then 37 years old and had been on the road, except for the war years, since leaving school at 18.

The monthly Newsletter, *Selling*, which he owns and writes, was launched in 1955. Since then its circulation has grown at an astonishing pace and its many thousands of subscribers are located not only in the United Kingdom but in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the U.S.A., Sweden, Germany, Holland and Greece.

LETTERS TO SALESMEN consists of a collection of personal letters which have appeared in an editorial section of *Selling*. Tom Hull, Sales Director of the Dictaphone Company and one of Britain's outstanding Sales Executives, has said about this collection:

> *"I commend these letters to you, knowing full well that you will find in them a wealth of understanding of the everyday problems of salesmen and an abundance of good commonsense advice."*

Stuart Thomson writes about selling in a way in which only a practical experienced salesman could write about this vital subject—vividly, truthfully and realistically. He describes the rewards but does not neglect the disappointments; he refers to the successes but does not ignore the failures. This is a British book for salesmen by a British salesman.

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